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CAMELEON SKETCHES.

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Cameleon Sketches.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A PICTURESQUE
PROMENADE ROUND DORKING."

— Nil fuit unquam
Sic impar sibi.—Horat.

Sure such a various creature ne'er was seen.—Francis, in imit.

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TO THE READER.

THE Author of the following pages is not unknown to the literary public, by a topographical description of one of the most delightful districts in England, written in his nineteenth and twentieth years, but revised and enlarged in a second edition, published in 1823. His success on this occasion was more attributable to the picturesque celebrity of his subject, than to any attraction which his

slender talents could contribute to its *locale*. Nevertheless, this favourable reception of his first production induced him to announce for publication a volume of “CAMELEON SKETCHES,” which has been delayed until the present moment; and probably, the author’s interests and the gratification of the public would have been equally studied, had the “Cameleon” been altogether left to a *sine die* fate.

A taste for literature, and that, too, in childhood, first led the writer into the trammels of authorship, as a relief from his school studies; and before he read the first *Æneid* of Virgil, he

had published a manuscript school newspaper, somewhat on the plan, though certainly not an imitation of, the *Etonian Miscellany*. This early thirst for literature next seduced him from other professional pursuits ; and from the publication of his first book, he determined on a literary life. But these memoranda are enlarged into detail, in the progress of the subsequent pages.

The above circumstances will, it is hoped, be received as apologetic for the delay of the “*CAMELEON SKETCHES* ;” especially when it is known that the present volume has been a labour of leisure, or like the

private studies of a painter, not unprofitable employment for the intervals of more active life. To say they were not intended for the public eye, would be prevarication; and to hope that they may prove as gratifying to the reader as they have been to the writer, would be somewhat too presumptuous. To the latter they have been a sweet solace during many hours of “trial and endurance;” and, as a proof of their fidelity, (though, in this place, somewhat ungracious and egotistical) the labour of recording them has often revived the pangs of gloom and suffering. This is what has been eloquently called *the joy of grief*;—a pleasure which men of

rough natures may ridicule, because they are too ignorant of mankind to allow themselves to be susceptible of such influence.

The epithet of “Cameleon” has been chosen for these “Sketches,” as the most appropriate to denote the shades and reflections which they contain. Many gems of antiquity would have been easily recognised amidst the crudities of the present author, even had not such been denoted by acknowledgement. Original identities are left for the reader to discard or enjoy, as his taste may suggest; but as no love of fame, interest, or worse motive, has stimu-

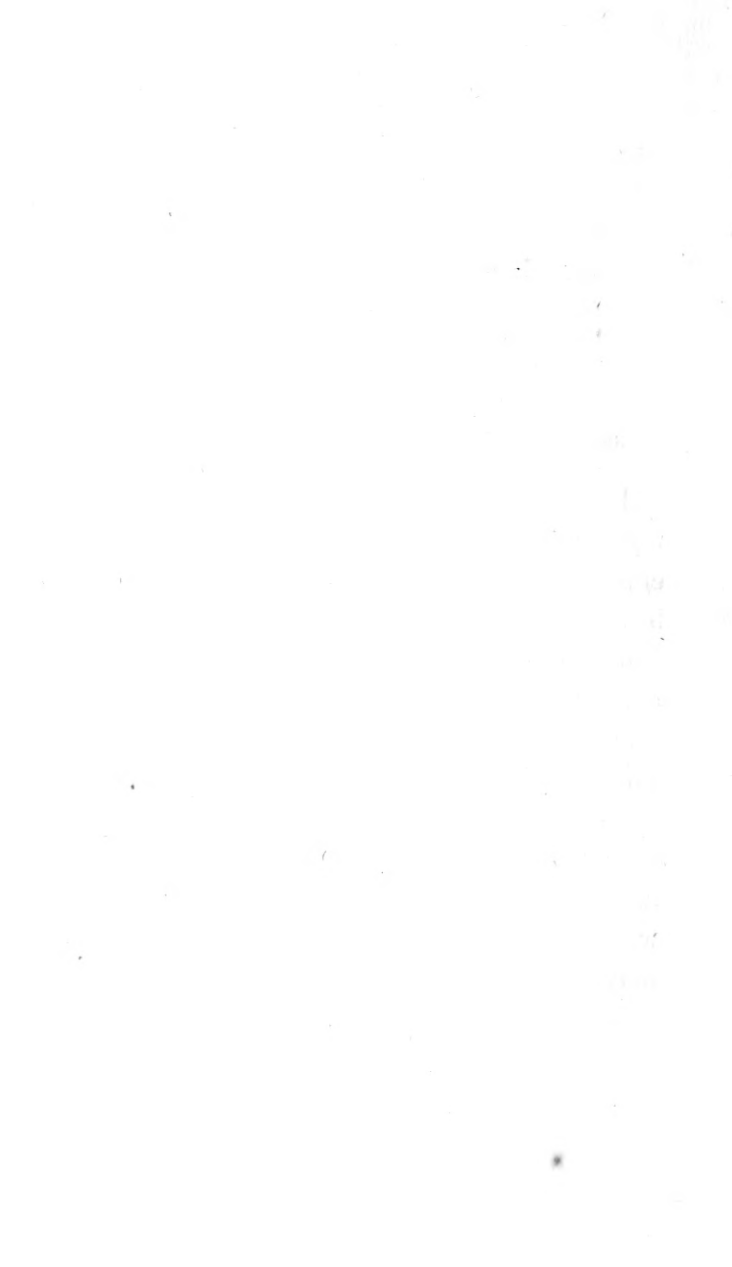
lated the enthusiasm of either of these pages, the writer does not hesitate to throw himself before the respecters of truth and singleness of heart. Inadvertencies and errors of the head have, doubtless, found their way here ; but for these misgivings, the author hopes to receive the indulgence of his readers.

London, April, 1828.

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* At page 134. it should be September 7, and *three* (instead of two) following Sundays.



Introduction.

“ Show the motley-minded gentleman in.”—*Shakspeare.*

I CAN trace the love of Solitude among my earliest predilections, and I number its enjoyment with the happiest hours of my little life. This impression, received in my childhood, has been strengthened in youth, and is now matured in manhood. If society brand me with the name of a Misanthrope, I must bear my lot with patience. I entered the world with better feelings ; but experience has saddened me to the soul, and all the consolation I find—is in myself, so that, with the old philosopher, I may say, “ I am never less alone, than when alone.” I hope it will not be considered as a recantation, or conviction of error, if I substitute

“retirement” for “solitude;” the latter being considered as too ascetic a state for the high-bred readers of the present day.

It matters not for me here to explain, more in detail, the motives with which I have secluded *myself* (I mean mentally) from the herd of mankind. Suffice it now to say, that having lost the fondest endearments of life, or those which had the fastest hold on my affections, I consider myself as a detached being, whose converse is with the business, but seldom with the bosoms, of society. These premises must not, however, be mistaken for sorrowings, or repinings at Nature, or her dispensations. Reason and resignation have more to do with my composition than to allow me to murmur at the precarious tenure of existence, or at the justice of its conditions. We have a balm for all these cares, and no wounds are sooner healed, than those inflicted by death. The mind is soon reconciled to this almost imaginary affliction, or the blank is filled up. It is not so with the other sufferings

of SENSIBILITY, or those created by the infidelity and ingratitude of man. They too generally accelerate and increase the infirmities of age, and becloud the latter years of life with “ friends remembering not,” which sorrow ceases but in death.

All I could wish to be inferred from the above, is somewhat of an explanation for the spirit which characterises the following few pages, lest mankind should receive the author as their common enemy ; whereas, although I do not say, with Jaques :

Give me leave

To speak my mind, and I will through and through

Cleanse the foul body of the infected world,

If they will patiently receive my medicine ;—

I crave their indulgence ; and all the revenge I ask will be gratified, as it must be confessed, but a sorry requital for any injuries. Hundreds of philosophers have already outwritten themselves on the subject of Happiness, whose *writings* have been the only illustrations of their views. I trust that I shall not be set down with them, nor do I wish to add a jot to their theories. I have been a more

silent spectator of mankind, and, notwithstanding my conclusions may have little novelty to recommend them, I will be confident enough to assert they are not borrowed from the experience of others.

I am a devout admirer of Shakspeare ; but of neither of the gems of his genius more than his comedy—*As you like It*. Indeed, the wit, love, and philosophy of that play are so nicely suited to my frame of mind, that in witnessing its enactment on the stage, I have been carried out of the theatre, even into the woods and groves of Arden :—the very life and soul of dramatic influence. Of the genius of Hamlet I am proud to say I am almost equally as warm an admirer ; and the distinction I would draw is this ; viz.—that the sweetness and simplicity of adversity and forest life, as delineated in the former production, are to me more inviting than the fine-spun melancholy of Hamlet, chequered as it is by the noblest bursts of reason and passion. I would say with the Duke, in *As you like It* :

Hath not custom made this life more sweet
Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
More free from peril than the envious court?

I shall not waste more words on Shakspeare, on whom the modesty of Milton led him to offer an encomium with diffidence. In truth, we have stolen so liberally from his writings, that our every-day conversation is a tribute to his merit.

It may be as well to mention, that the substance of the following chapters is from the world—partly from impressions on the surface of memory—and partly from recorded facts—in the note-book of an Observer Nature. The characters have ceased to live but in recollection, or still exist, and will, doubtless, be recognised; as they are drawn from the “loop-holes of retreat,” wherein opportunities for observation have been by no means rare.

It will be seen throughout the subsequent pages whether I am justified in these preliminaries with my readers. I have little to boast beyond the usual lot of a scion of

respectable middle life. I herded with no noble stock when at school, nor have I ever ventured on the threshold of the court. I have rather chosen to divert my leisure hours beneath the porticoes of Nature, or in the cottages of humble life. On comparing the inmates of the latter with the recorded lives of those in palaces, I found neither to be masters of themselves, but in a sort of social slavery—the one striving to live by laborious industry—the other tortured to exist in excess, and shut out from the enjoyment of life by an accumulation of luxuries. Thus both were states of negative happiness, and proved to me that happiness, where it can be found, is only in contentment. “I reasoned thus with life:” animal enjoyments are limited, and when they cease distaste ensues. Possession increases desire in ourselves, and envy in others: this set me against the silly passion of avarice, and made me scorn the “having and holding,” as one of the greatest of human follies. They who ground their enjoyments in pos-

session, will also be disappointed. Change and the love of variety are so strongly marked in our nature, that to be always the same is insipid : disappointment and success serve to mingle with the sweets of life ; but a long course of either state levels the spirit in despair, or elevates it into pitiless pride. Of the empire of the mind it is impossible to speak in definite terms. It is alike the region of pain and happiness ; its sufferings are doubly acute ; but when well regulated, we may take the run of the world in comparative security. All other pretences to enjoyment remind one of “ children singing in the dark to drive away fear.”

It may next be asked, why should I obtrude upon the world these broodings of my melancholy, or why should I allow the spring of my life to be poisoned by such misanthropic sentimentalities. To this I answer, that if I have not, like lord Chesterfield, “ run the giddy round,” I must plead guilty to an ordinary share of vices and misgivings, in common with my fellow

creatures. My conscience is unmolested by reproach, and my health unbroken by excess; but my heart is like one of those stringed instruments, on which the bleak wild winds love to wanton, and which vibrate with every discord of the storm:

—— infixum stridit sub pectore vulnus.

To say that I am discontented with the *scheme* of the world, or that I could add to its real or imaginary miseries, would be equally untrue: I do not repine at its distinctions, because it is allowed that they are scattered abroad with little discrimination; and beyond the usual love of superiority observable in all men, I have scarce a whit of ambition. The task of enquiry is perhaps but ill suited to me, and scholarship, so far from a badge of distinction, is almost a sure sign of poverty and disquietude. Neither the closet nor the cloister have charms to hold me with the controversies of their schools, nor the wisdom overmuch of their sects. I hate the mummerly of learning, and,

like Montaigne, would use books as sources of pleasure and not of distraction; and of the two evils, I would rather be lost in the mist of ignorance than in the depth of wisdom. I disclaim the “whence” and “whither” of the sceptic, and consider the only treasurable earthly knowledge to consist in knowing *what I am*; which, amidst all the intricacies of philosophy, is the purest, in like manner as it is the most useful, of human acquirements.

Childhood.

A child is man in a small letter. * * * Nature and his parents alike dandle him and tice him on with a bait of sugar to a draught of wormwood.—*Bishop Earle.*

My eyes are dim with childish tears,
My heart is idly stirr'd;
For the same sound is in my ears
Which in those days I heard.

Thus fares it still in our decay;
And yet the wiser mind
Mourns less for what time takes away,
Than what he leaves behind.—*Wordsworth.*

THERE are few persons who do not find some amusement in retracing the flowery fields of their childhood. Although the spring-tide of existence, this season has its adversities; from which the waxen imaginations of children often receive impressions which dissolve only with life itself. Melancholy and misanthropy often succeed cheerfulness and high-born hope; and when they have once overcast our childhood,

their influence is almost certain, and the diversions of the world are but of little avail to clear away their gloom.

The incidents of childhood, however puerile and sportive, give a tone to the habits of after-life ; since here the budding ideas of nature are brought into action, uninfluenced by the designs of men ; and there is a kind of spontaneousness in many actions of children which we in vain expect in riper years. It is, too, the season of innocence, and can alone furnish us with a true picture of the primitive simplicity of human nature. None but the wicked will shrink from a recurrence to this era of their lives ; and if one of the guilty be but reclaimed by the retrospect, a good purpose is effected.

* * * * *

When I was about five years old, my youngest brother died. His death was kept secret from me, by the nurse telling me that he had been sent to the house of a relation in the country. I believed the story. On the day of his burial, I was

taken to an old widow-lady and her daughter. In the evening my favourite nurse came for me; but scarcely was the door opened when I perceived her to be dressed in deep mourning. I questioned her with more than my usual shrewdness, till the good old woman burst into tears, telling me that my dear brother was dead, and had on that day been buried. I now thought my little heart would break. The happiness which I had anticipated from the society of a younger brother, not to speak of the superior notions which my seniority had raised—were now cut off. I remembered too, that during the day I had heard the tolling bell, but unconscious of its meaning, I continued my gambols—and this, thought I, while a brother's remains were laying in the cold ground. All the efforts of my good nurse to appease me were useless; her fondness and coaxing were to me bitter insult. The concealment of his death, devised for a good purpose, appeared to be a fraud on my feelings, and my grief

now became two-fold; my sorrow was increased by knowing that I had been abused—at which my unruly spirit rose and swelled with anger, implacable but unutterable.

I have a faint recollection of my general frame of mind during this first shock of death. On my return home, I found it a house of mourning—dismal and half-closed. Perhaps the excited state of my own feelings made me think the occurrence less noticed than it ought to have been: for, if we except the yearning affection of a mother, the emotions caused by the death of children are soon hushed by the peaceful reflection, that were we to repine we should but lament their happiness. I was not then allowed to feel thus, and the blank which this event created, was not by me so easily understood. I could not reconcile my active mind with the stifling stillness of the chambers of our house. There was to me a very difference which I am now at a loss to describe. What was offered as consolation only made

my green wound smart the more, and gave fresh vent to my grief. I sought sleep ; but dreams, unlike the waking rebukes of conscience, disturbed my slumbers. The form of my little brother—his oft-repeated name was in my ears—his laughing blue eyes were before me—I awoke, but heard not his cry—he had fled from my embrace—“they have taken him away,” said I, “where have they lain him?” In my prayers I was taught to acknowledge what I thought an affliction to be a mark of Divine favor. I confess that I murmured, and, like Spenser’s shepherd, hated

the darkness and the dreary night,
Because they bred sad balefulness in me.

I felt terrified on hearing the word Death repeated—cowardice overcame me as though an enemy had been before me, and my inquiring spirit did not tend to appease these apprehensions. I remember hearing our nurse use certain words unlike the language of common conversation, which frequently occurred

in, as she said, "the Testament." She often kissed me, and strove to comfort me, by telling me that my dear little brother was "in heaven." I now began to feel somewhat more composed ; but on coupling the words " death and heaven," I was again perplexed. One was all sadness—the other neither sad nor happy ; but at the latter, I became more serene ; for the word, often repeated, produced in me a train of the most consolatory reflection. Then the word " Death," in a half-whisper, broke upon mine ear, at which I changed color, chilled, and stood amazed. I remember the nurse tried to divert me with other subjects. All would not avail.

I had not then seen a corse ; but, while indulging my taste for toy-pictures, I one day met with a representation of Death, unskilfully engraved on wood. About this time, too, I heard a story of mechanical skeletons in a surgery cupboard, and some equally pernicious narrative of a bone-house. These circumstances added to my terrors,

and, sleeping or waking, I saw Death in all his vulgar monstrosity. It is much to be regretted that the above and similar hieroglyphics were ever raked from caverns and cells to terrify and torment men on earth: and that all such symbolical mummery had not been allowed to crumble and decay on the tombs it was first suffered to deface.

There was still another fosterer of melancholy in our old nurse, who chronicled as many deaths as she could in a London parish, and witnessed many of its funerals. Had she indulged this taste in the country, I could freely have pardoned her; but at this moment, nothing is so frigid and mechanical as a funeral in the metropolis; so slovenly and unfeelingly conducted, or more repugnant to the sympathies of relatives and friends. The old woman was, as I have said, a correct observer of these matters, and she generally made me a partaking companion of her sorrow. She accordingly had her eye on muffled knockers and closed windows, knew the monotony of each bell,

and kept up a sort of gossiping acquaintance with the clerk and sexton. I recollect her to have possessed the most acute feelings, which she seldom could repress; for often have I seen the tear glisten down her furrowed cheek, as she witnessed the funeral of a stranger. I would that on all such occasions I had turned away. I was of too tender an age to bear such scenes, but I rather courted than shunned them.

In her visits to the church-yard, she was not inattentive to the grave of my little brother. It is situate between two dilapidated abutments of the church. She disliked the stunted and neglected appearance of the grass and earth around it; and even turfed the grave herself. I remember that for several months after, we never passed the church-yard without stopping to peep through the rails at the head and foot stone: alas, how changed! a few months since I tried to find this humble memorial, but the spot, in common with the rest of the ground, was an unvarying scene of wreck and desola-

tion, and the few prouder monuments that time had spared, seemed but reserved to be mutilated and defaced by wanton idlers.

* * * * *

Habits of melancholy are often engendered in childhood, and are perhaps brought about by such common-place circumstances as I have here mentioned. It is not too much to presume that if their *germen* be not thus traced, it is at least in this manner nourished in its growth.

Youth-melancholy is, therefore, of all passions, the most dangerous ; and the more safely to avoid its poison, children should rather be taught to view mankind in the distance, than allowed to study them in the abstract ; the latter being too frightful a picture for their tender minds, and it being a well-known fact, that whatever may be our early opinion of our species, it is seldom known to grow better ; on the contrary, much worse. Books are, for the most part, faithless pictures of men : they are more inclined to flatter their prejudices, than to

correct their vices, and where one book is studied for useful profit, hundreds are read for mere idle gratification, and as often to create and quicken ideas of pleasure, and create higher gusto for its short-lived indulgence. For this purpose, the ennobling powers of language are set about, like so many springes, to catch men's minds; and all her graces are flourished around their brain for the worst purposes—viz. to deceive man in his estimate of himself, and to hide himself from *what he is*. The chance, is that he will listen to whichever sect or school best flatters his conceit; and thus, his understanding is put up for sale to the highest bidder. He seldom stops to sift motives; for were he to do this, he would lose all his life in the task, without finding two grains of good; but frequently when he sees evil, beyond suspicion, by a sort of blind fatuity, he will rather sin against his own judgment than practise self-denial. These are truths which men generally acknowledge before they arrive at maturity; but untimely

knowledge of them will marr the only innocent season of life, and serve to terrify and distort the brain of spotless youth.

Certain books are also helps to youth-melancholy, especially where its virus has been previously infused into the mind by domestic affliction, or by overweening sorrow at the infidelity of our own nature. I recollect an instance of this species of melancholy on my first sight of that most baneful of all pestilential books, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, the fanaticism of whose pages has been known to poison scores of children, and has made more enemies than friends to the cause it pretends to espouse. For my own part I can well attest its effect. In the early years of boyhood, I had proceeded in my reading, till Christian arrives at "the hill of difficulty,"—when, horror-struck and disgusted, I threw away the volume, and have never since been induced to take it up. At the moment, I felt as we should imagine a convicted criminal feels, when surrounded by the terrors of guilt and punishment : had this

impression been in riper years, some formalists might attribute it to the stings of conscience. The book is still read, and within these few months I was much surprised to hear an English countess, when in a bookseller's shop, remark to her companion (in French) that the *Pilgrim's Progress* was an excellent book for a servants' hall:—perhaps she would have been ashamed of such an opinion expressed in English.

Another medium for narrowing the ideas of children, is allowing them to linger over Fox's *Book of Martyrs*. Such scenes of human atrocity as are exhibited in its intolerant pages and frightful pictures, should only be opened to more comprehensive minds; since, at every age, it will impress us with horror, and not unfrequently direct our taste in channels for similar developements of human character. Altogether, this book is better fitted for the gravity of the historian than for the buoyancy of youth, and rather than it had ever been placed in the way of

children, it should have been burnt a century ago by the common hangman.

To this class of books, in effect at least, belongs Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, which, in spite of its slips of Latinity, at some day or other has found its way into hundreds of cottages, to the discomfiture of as many families. Johnson says that Sterne borrowed largely from this book, and I am inclined to think Shenstone did the same. I remember reading it in forty sittings, at least; but I often shuddered and sickened in my progress.

Perhaps I dwell too fondly on these trifles; for it has often occurred to me, that in youth, what I would call the *solitude* of books is of all propensities the most dangerous. It is apt to poison the spring of life; hence all that flows from it is unhealthy and bitter. Bad companions are, at all times, unsafe, and some books resemble them in their influence upon the youthful heart. There is too, in mankind, a certain hankering for the gloomy side of nature,

whence the trials and convictions of vice become so much more interesting and attractive than the brightest success of virtue. In a novel, or on the stage, they care not to see the hero obtain his object by a mere common-place course of things. There must be the perpetual conflict of bad passions to excite, or all will be vapid and tiresome; and by a species of false morality, they attempt to conceal this taste for scenes of evil,—it being acknowledged that, in such cases, men are oftener prone to imitate than avoid.

The above may be more characteristic of vulgar than of refined minds, and perhaps this distinction is never more evident than in an English multitude. I have accordingly placed to its account, those otherwise unexplained bursts of popular feeling, which are often to be witnessed in crowds assembled at any public disaster, or outrage on humanity. On these occasions, the less the mischief, the greater the disappointment of the mob. This is peculiarly

applicable to *Fires*, common wrecks, in which all the world seem interested, but few are concerned. Here, the low humours, or, as a punster would say, the lively sympathies, of the crowd, often make the scene more like one of public rejoicing than of private calamity. As the flames subside, the waggery grows flat; but the most extraordinary feeling displayed on these occasions, is that kind of savage yell which the mob are accustomed to raise at different stages of the conflagration.

Misanthropy is a disagreeable spot in a man's character, and if we are to be ruled by the maxims of the world, it will not serve him a whit in his intercourse with mankind. In our times, the monk and the hermit live but in the page of romance; and the few, who are disgusted with the infidelity of their race, and have the good sense to seclude themselves from further insult, excite as much wonder in the world as would a tribe of wandering fanatics.* The haters of

* It deserves notice, that Nat. Lee, who said so many hard

mankind are usually set down as the largest dealers in the wares of hypocrisy, who calculate that the specks on their own character will be lost in the sins of the multitude. This opinion, as often applied, is uncharitable and roguish; since to plunder a man, and then brand him as a felon, is a law not yet recognised by the worst of banditti: even poor Gil Blas is better treated by his honourable companions of the cave. "Misery makes men acquainted with strange bed-fellows;" and if men be hypocrites, in nine out of ten cases, it is rather the effect of company than of design; and it is not among old rogues that the successful practice of hypocrisy is usually made. This

things of mankind, was set down as mad. His madness was a fortunate circumstance for his fellow men: but the poet who wrote

Drive me, O drive me from that traitor, man!

* * * * *

Can there be found so terrible a ruin

As man! false man! smiling destructive man!

—might well say to the fellow who called him a madman,—
 " 'tis easier to write like a fool than a madman."

charge of hypocrisy, therefore, arises from the fear of some start of skill over those who advance it, or when recrimination becomes self-preservation. The victim often loves its seducer, but the seducer seldom his victim; therefore, the immaculate have little to fear from their contact with misanthropes: while as overlookers of the squabbles of rogues, the honest may learn how they have been plundered, without perfecting themselves in the practice.

He who would study mankind in safety, must not stir from his fireside, but there content himself with their portraits as they are drawn by intriguing historians, and in the fancies of poets, and the common conceits of self-biographers. He will then view the actions of his contemporaries, as it were, through a mist; the voice of truth being stifled in the clamour of party, and the eye of reason blinded with gold dust. He must consider public men as so many puppets, but he must not meddle with the strings by which the *policinelli* are worked. If he

require illustrations of virtue, he must seek it in the lives of the Fathers: it will not flourish in the present age; as well might he seek for icebergs in the hot tide of the Ganges. In these outlines he may trace human character, as in a map, whose seas resemble unruffled lakes, and whose deserts compare with fruitful valleys: but let him beware how he trust himself with such a guide. To preserve the dream undisturbed, and the spell unbroken, this student of humanity must live in a "loop-hole of retreat," in the country. In the solitude of a city, his ears will be annoyed with the countless cries and sounds of toil and luxury, struggling for the uppermost seat. He will hear slavery at work out of doors, from the bawlings of menial life, to the word of command. This will prove another world to such a novice.

To keep the charm, he must not stray beyond his own park or garden, unless it be to some neighbouring forest, where he may contemplate nature in her grandest features

of the sublime and wonderful. He should avoid even a village; and a town as the traveller would a nest of termites. If he wander, let him take heed at the hum of a city, as he would at the rattle of the serpent, and consider it as the warhoop of destruction. Thus secure from man, he may walk out with nature, and return with his mind delighted and refreshed with her harmonies.

His whole life will then be a green and flourishing youth: his dissolution will not be by piecemeal death, but almost imperceptible; and the divine lessons derived from his constant contemplation of nature will teach him to hail this crisis as a connecting scene of his pilgrimage. Temperance will induce cheerfulness and equanimity—the key-stone of real pleasure. All other attempts at enjoyment are like air-bubbles on the stream, which rise and sink, or glide on, and are lost in the current. Life, from which men so dearly part, is too often meted out by themselves: the rational recreations of nature being insuffi-

cient for them, though considering life too short, they render it still shorter by their own excesses, till disease overtakes them, and even death often treads on the heels of aspiring youth. This piecemeal death is, indeed, a sort of *suicide*; for how often do we see men with imbecile intellect and disabled frames, stalking about the earth like spectres, and this too in the meridian of life; till at length they become like clay unhallowed, or with their Promethean fire dwindled to its last embers!

As we are all, in a greater or less degree, creatures of habit, it necessarily follows that whatever we imbibe in our youth, will, if not checked, “grow with our growth.” But discipline will correct the storms of anger, and the waywardness of temper; whilst education will fit the mind for pursuits of graver years. A retrospect of our childhood, its joys and adversities, will then resemble an episode in a drama, by reverting to which we may take up many valuable precepts for after life; and then see what innocence we have outlived.

B. L. ;*

OR

London at Midnight.

“London is nothing to some people ; but to a man whose pleasure is intellectual, London is the place.—You cannot play tricks with your fortune in a small place; you must make an uniform appearance.”—*Johnson*.

“For this end, that I might entertain myself at home, and together refresh my mind after my studies, and that I might not need the company of young men, in whom I observed in those times much ill example and debauchery.”—*Life of Lord Herbert of Cherbury*.

* (*Baccalarius Londinensis*)--the London bachelor.

“Dividing the day and night into twenty-four hours, they appoint six of them for work ; three of which are before dinner, and three after ; they then sup : and at eight o’clock, counting from noon, go to bed, and sleep eight hours —
Sir Thomas Moore’s Utopia.

“Though the rabble of mankind look upon these and on innumerable other things of the same nature, as pleasures ; the Utopians, on the contrary, observing, that there is nothing in them truly pleasant, conclude that they are not to be reckoned among pleasures : for though these things may create some tickling in the senses (which seems to be a true notion of pleasure) yet they imagine that this does not arise from the nature of the thing itself, but from a depraved custom, which may so vitiate a man’s taste, that bitter things may pass for sweet ; * * * * * but as a man’s sense when corrupted, either by a disease or some ill habit, does not change the nature of other things, so neither can it change the nature of pleasure.—*Ibid.*

B. L.; or London at Midnight.

OF all locomotive beings, a London Bachelor is the most flitting. He is ever at hawk and buzzard with what the world calls society and solitude—either running the giddy round of the Babylonian amusements, or pent up in the sepulchral recesses of his own chambers. He cannot enjoy a friend *at home* : *if abroad*, the extent of his favor is perhaps estimated by its cost. He pays visits like tribute-money, but reluctantly quits the domestic comforts of a family circle for the solitariness of his own habitation. If perchance a Templar, he is not believed to possess the aboriginal celibacy of that order ; but is suspected of hiding his own irregularities with the pretext of seclusion and study. It is true, Congreve wrote his comedies while resident in the Temple,

and they exhibit the utmost license of his times. Here he wrote the *Old Bachelor*, in the languor of convalescence ; but Congreve, though himself an “intellectual gladiator,” was, as Voltaire said of him, unseasonably vain, and like his characters, almost artificially gay ; and is no more a fair specimen of Templar life, than Cowper with his splenetic monodies and musings. The *chamber life* (not the chambering of St. Paul) is, however, the most congenial to a man of mind. If he be tired with his own fire, or the flame of his own lamp, he has only to think of Dr. Johnson’s boast in his chimney-corner, in Bolt-court, and a little exertion will bring him forth into a new world. When at home, his “house is his castle,” where, secure as the Chinese with their great wall, he may seclude himself, trusting to his laundress for a ministering angel. Here he may shut himself up from the rude interference of vulgar minds, secure from the impertinent curiosity of the idle, and the importunities of false friends. Without doors he

sees all mankind striving for his gratification, and on the same tenure as all his other mundane enjoyments are held (for at best he is but a tenant-at-will), he may enjoy splendidly illuminated saloons ; at every turn he is surrounded by the substantial luxuries of life ; while his imagination may be feasted with intellectual banquets prepared by the master spirits of the past, as well as of the present ages. All these enjoyments are over and above the social resources of a metropolis, and are within the reach of a mile. A man of reflective temperament conceals more than half his enjoyment : though he be drunken with delight, his intoxication does not resemble that of grosser minds ; neither does he vent his softer sympathies in the roar of the table, or the maudlin sentimentality of its songs. With him nothing is barren ; his cup of joy runs over when others imagine it to be exhausted, and that too with joy which it never entered into their hearts to conceive. All endeavours to impart these set notions

to others are useless ; for, as “ every man will speak of the fair as his own market has gone in it,” there can be no universal scheme of happiness laid down for the present or future generations. Being long since convinced of the truth of this maxim, I have learned to disregard the world’s sneers about “ a lean cheek, a sunken eye, or an untied shoe,” and other features of the outward man ; since, if you are accounted unhappy, there is less chance of your being envied, than if thought otherwise. The contented man holds in the little region of his own heart more happiness than the rule of empires can command ; and he who builds all his enjoyments on the friendship of the world, or who is not happy, as the philosophers say, *per se*, must be the patient of the world, and alike tossed to and fro on its troubled seas. Its pleasures are but as helps to momentary happiness, and, like brandy, assist to chase away *ennui* ; but without a sort of self-pilotage, they will serve as false lights to decoy the unskilled voyager to his destruction. Unless such a heart as the

above finds an echo or response in society, the more secret its fluttering sympathies are kept from the world, the better for its possessor ; it should then be the charnel-house for its own grief, and the hiding-place of its own joy. Neither is such conduct misanthropy, since a weak, confiding heart often occasions much mischief, by encouraging the disguised enemies of mankind in their evil successes.

I chance to belong to the above-mentioned fraternity, and the reader will therefore conclude me to be the *Childe* of the subsequent pilgrimage, unholy as some of its windings and turnings may appear. In London the seasons are reversed ; or (to the point) winter is the London harvest for the pleasure hunter and the philosopher. On a cold January night, tired with studying mankind in the abstract, and the frigid morality of a fire-side, I put out my flaming minister, and soon found myself in that animated *Corso* of London—the Strand. There is something very impressive, not to say monastic, in an Inn of Court ; for these esta-

blishments are as nearly associated with the habits of our ancestors, as their vassals are with our livery servants. The cloisters, courts, and paved passages of such places have a cold stillness, which is so strong a contrast with the full tide of their neighbourhood, that they rather resemble receptacles of suffering, or depositories of the dead, than part and parcel of a living metropolis. But what is this compared with the pursuits of their inmates, from the tyro who is perplexing himself over a page of Blackstone, to the subtle wight, who is racking and torturing his brain to hoodwink truth, that he may profit by her blindness. This is, however, but a single line in the problem with which ingenuity is sometimes baffled, and right not unfrequently subverted by the stronger energies of artifice and cunning.

The streets were now in full blaze of light, and many a face and garment, whose honesty and beauty would have shrunk from the vulgar glare of day, shone resplendent in the moving throng. A strong current seemed to have set in towards the west, and

the majority of the crowd were ebbing from the mucky haunts of the city,—some to their residences in the suburbs, and others, still content to remain in town, were about to seek recreation amidst the poisoned atmosphere of crowded theatres, or to be fumigated in coffee-rooms, in whose neighbourhoods it was just approaching to high-water mark. Had John Bunyan beheld this scene, he might have said, Satan was setting his springes ; but for my part, I preferred the good-humoured devilry of Faustus, and did not feel the influence of such fanatical apprehensions.

It was Monday, in London the busiest night of the week, probably, in consequence of the pious practice of reading Sunday newspapers, which act as stimulants on the public by furnishing them with the best catalogue of the amusements of the ensuing six days ; the immense increase of these equivocating publications being one of the grand results of educational enlightenment. In their oracles every appetite is studied ; and when we consider the thousands sold

weekly, we need not be surprised at Monday being the gala day, or holiday of the week,—from the proneness of mankind to take pleasure by the forelock. One cannot breakfast without the Examiner, and another as regularly looks for the *niaiserie* of the John Bull as he would for the Psalms at church; a third stays at home all the morning to read and discuss the political acumen of the News; the first enquiry of the *sporting* man is for *his* oracle, with its matches and feats, which he devours with half-opened eyes—such are his orisons; another cannot rise till he has read the “Dispatch;” then the fond parents linger over the home news of the Observer, to enliven their after-dinner chat, occasionally admonishing their children by paragraphs of fire and water accidents; and if it but contain the “best account” of a murder, or of crimes still more baneful to domestic peace, the chance is that it will be ransacked by every one of the household, and perhaps read aloud to the children: such is the prurient curiosity

of the patrons of Sunday newspapers ; and it is a boasted fact that these oracles of the week are circulated thirty miles round London before half the population of the metropolis have risen from their beds. We must, therefore, allow that the partial cessation of bodily toil on a Sunday is more than exceeded by this extra exertion of the mind, or at least of some of its meanest faculties.*

The patent theatres were open, and it was tragedy night, and, above all, the *chef d'œuvre* of Shakspeare,—Hamlet, was performing at each house ; the rival Danes being Kean and Young. I chose the latter, at Covent-garden theatre, thereby combining the highest excellence of the actor with that of the poet. Indeed, Mr. Young's embodiment of Hamlet deserves the highest praise : the illusion is so complete, and the conceptions of the author and actor are so nicely

* I hope I shall not be mistaken in this digression, or be suspected of a puritanical motive. On the contrary, it is only introduced to account for the importance attached to Monday in the London calendar—perhaps, a vulgar distinction, but still influencing a large majority of the people.

poised, that they appear the emanations of the same brain. In the Hamlet of Mr. Kean there are also gleams of excellence; but they appear as the study and effort of the actor, and the charm is consequently lost. Much of the dignified temperament of philosophic melancholy, “native, and to the manner born,” is wanting in the latter representative; and while the one soars to the proudest energies of concealed art, the other ranks as a performance, barely conceived, and still more unequally embodied. The former is altogether a near approach to perfection of—acting—for it is still art, notwithstanding the “modesty of nature” is less “overstepped” in this than in any other histrionic triumph our times are likely to afford.

John Kemble, the “pride of the British stage,” was wont to say to his friend, and since biographer, Mr. Boaden, “take up any Shakspeare you will, from the first collection of his works to the last, which has been *read*, and look what play bears the most obvious

signs of perusal. My life for it, they will be found in the volume which contains the play of Hamlet." The effect is the same in the theatre as in the closet, and so strongly does it enchain the feelings of the audience, that on the present occasion, (entering the theatre during the platform scene, act 1.) forcibly re-called to my memory the observation of Hume, that "a man who enters the theatre is immediately struck with the view of so great a multitude, participating of one common amusement; and experiences, from their very aspect, a superior sensibility, or disposition of being affected with every sentiment which he shares with his fellow-creatures." The actor seemed to hold the key, or master spring of the hearts and understandings of his audience, and no sooner had the electric flash of his excellence shot forth, than it was followed up by the thunder of their admiration—in effect resembling a discharge of artillery. In short, the universal reception of the play of Hamlet is always

highly creditable to the English people, and proves, that besides possessing the finest language for dramatic writing, they have the good taste to appreciate its proudest productions.

This digression on the merits of Hamlet may appear very germane to my story, or, at best, but “madness with method in it.” Let moralists say what they will, a theatre is a school of morality, and what is called a “full house” is as much the pride and glory of a Londoner, as a fair, birth-day, or jubilee is of a country squire. It in part realizes the hackneyed motto,

“*Spectatur veniunt*,” &c.

an unlucky quotation for an unlatinized lady, which has betrayed more smatterers than the “*tempus fugit*” of our sundials: but he who studies in this school of reflection will not allow his attention to be entirely absorbed with what is passing on the stage. Besides the mechanical decorum of that department, he will find almost equal claims in the audience; and if he be a phy-

siognomist, the chance is that he will gladly borrow the genius of Hogarth for ten minutes, if only to sketch *outlines on his thumb nail*. In France, the conduct of the audience is as mechanical as that of the actors; silence is instantly obtained, and as strictly preserved, and an interruption is almost a cause of alarm. But in an English audience, there is more of the sauciness of liberty; and a freer vent is given to their feelings, though often at the expense of justice and discernment, especially from the critical, though occasionally turbulent, tenants of the galleries, an ascendancy coeval with the acting of plays, and which Swift has in view when, in his Tale of a Tub he says, "Bombastry and buffoonery, by nature lofty and light, soar highest of all, and would be lost in the roof (of the theatre) if the prudent architect had not with more provident foresight contrived for them a fourth place, called *the twelvepenny gallery*, and there planted a suitable colony, who greedily intercept them in their passage."

The routine of theatre noises, bating its vulgarity, is always amusing, and besides having our hearts gladdened with the sight of hundreds of laughing faces, not a minute need be lost in a crowded theatre ; for in watching the effect of certain scenes, our attention must be fairly divided between the audience, the author, and the actors. Our neighbours may in vain sneer at the corrupt taste of an English audience ; but the shade of their Voltaire, or the fiery poet himself, would not persuade them out of the ghost scenes of Hamlet or Macbeth, the dream of Richard, or the smothering of Desdemona, or cheat them of their effect. What can surpass the thrilling interest of these scenes, or in comedy, the tittering ecstasy of such an one as that of the screen in the *School for Scandal*. The temper of the audience, too, is visible, first and last, during the evening ; their impatience, curiosity, waywardness, and above all, their quick resentment of suspected imposition or managerial fraud—privileges vested in

themselves, and the exercise of which is not even restrained by the presence of Royalty itself.

At the conclusion of the tragedy I quitted the theatre, compared with whose tainted atmosphere, even the vegetable odours of Covent-garden were gratefully refreshing. My road lay through the piazza, where, thanks to the genius of Inigo Jones, several little masquerade groups were flaunting in every direction, and even children were spreading their toils with the dexterity of those "past crying for their cake." The scene seemed to have been stolen from the Beggar's Opera, with its Pollys, Lucys, Sukeys, and Filches, by dozens, and many a Peachum and Lockit in trustworthy disguise: gangs of slip-shod and shoeless stripplings, were, by turns, hankering about the window of an hotel, and casting many long and lingering looks at the luxuries of the table displayed in the tantalizing style of a French restaurateur; then watching for a benevolent passenger to levy a contribution

for a night's lodging ; and in almost at the same minute playing at hide and seek about the pillars of the piazza, and making its vaulted roof resound with their urchin clamours. This scene was continued with little variation along King-street, whilst a courtly silence reigned in Henrietta-street, broken by the occasional rattle of a carriage on its road to the theatre. I remembered, too, that its daily traffic little exceeded that of the night, and perhaps no street in London has suffered more from the western emigrations of fashion, than Henrietta-street, it having once been the Bond-street of this quarter ; and generally crowded with carriages at the most fashionable shopping hours:—what a comparatively dejected and deserted appearance does it now present ! but can we wonder, when fashion is fast transferring her favors from Bond-street to the splendid line of Regent-street. Henrietta-street is still known to scores of nocturnal spirits by its kindred attractions of excellent cookery, aided by

plenteous outpourings of Burton ale. I crossed out of my road to pay a passing visit to that most eccentric of all resorts (not even the Coal-hole excepted) the Cyder Cellar, at whose fount Porson was wont to quaff, and doubtless with its regalings, replenish his stores of wit and humour. *Facilis descensus Averni*, says the poet, and so is that of the Cellar. Over the mantel-piece is a good portrait of the patron Professor, and perhaps his semblance may sometimes inspire a few of its admirers with fond recollections of the illustrious original, whilst thousands drink the Professor's potations with less classical inspiration, but with equally stirring effect.

To avoid the murky but grandiloquent Chandos-street, often quoted as a *key* to stories of royal and noble waggeries, I returned by Bedford-street to King-street, and viewed from hence the rapid current of passengers from the west to the vicinity of the theatres, in the full tide of Piccadilly and Coventry-street, through the

strait-like passage of Sidney's-alley, the *pavé* and shoals of Leicester-square, again narrowing into the flirtations of Cranbourn-street—the jostle and bustle of St. Martin's-court—the thickset line of New-street thence—which I likened to a conjoint retort and receiver. The analysis of their contents would, however, have been a task of more difficulty. Hence innumerable courts and alleys branch off, in their ramifications vying with the hundred arms of Briareus of old; but in their destinations proving that the *broad* path of destruction does not admit of universal application. Again, these arms resembled the *tentacula* of a star fish, which, in the words of the naturalist, the animal, in swimming, spreads like a net, and when he perceives any thing within them, draws them in again, thus catching it with all the dexterity of a fisherman. I hurried through these clutches of vice and guilt by a circuitous route, to the comparatively tranquil street of Pall Mall. Here, a sort of courtly silence reigned, from

the gloomy front of Carlton House to the monastic pile of St. James's, now and then broken by the solitary whirl of a carriage ; and by the clear chime of the palace clock. This was continued up St. James's-street, where the gloom was occasionally relieved by illuminated club-houses, but with equal quiet ; for the devil does not always deal in noise : on the contrary, his incarnations work oftener in silence and darkness : and however busy vice, with all her golden machinery and nets of gossamer, might be within doors, all was tranquil without. So long as her workings are confined to splendid saloons, the evil is, as it were, concentrated ; but the misery produced by their extension would be more disgusting and equally fatal. It is not a wholesome principle to qualify the vices of wealth, neither should it be ; but while gaming is confined to the upper circles, the evil will be less ostensible, and more likely to work its own cure. Fortune may repair the ravages of chance, or the steep fall of a few from

luxury to poverty, may scare many from the same precipice, whilst the transit being shorter, serves to flatter the victim with hopes of easily regaining his stand, or, in event of a strong reverse, to render him at once reckless of all that may follow: but all forget that the rein once let fall, and not re-taken up, makes the steed restless, unmanageable, and headlong, in its courses. There must be, too, a taste for *play*, as well as a passion for gain, to produce these lamentable effects, which points distinguish the calculating gamester from the avaricious risker; the one worships chance, or the spirit of the game, the other, lucre, or the vilest art of money-getting; the former almost deserves to be called an error of the head, while the latter is the base offspring of the heart; but so long as sterling industry scorns both of them, our *national* character will be preserved.*

* Extravagance can hardly be called a vice; for, as Franklin thinks, many a shilling that is let fall by a fool, is picked up by a wiser man. This good effect is often counteracted when money keeps floating among gamesters. But when the run is against the avaricious player, the chance

Such was my philosophy in St. James's Street ; and though somewhat at variance with the sweeping censures of a great portion of the press, and of defunct moralists, I hope its doctrines will be properly received by those who think for themselves. Popular fallacies are hard to stem ; for the multitude, who are easily misled, are as difficult to convince. It has long been the fashion to decry French habits, and to saddle that much-abused people with half our sins ; and among these charges is the sin of gaming, which is thought to have been wafted by some pestilential breeze from the *salons* of the Palais Royal, to the hells of St. James's—and from Frascati's to Crockford's ; the accusers forgetting that what one country licenses by law, the other prosecutes as a crime, and that however thick the saloons may be in London, the *stews* are left to Paris. As a make-weight in the moral scale, our lotteries are abolished, fairs are suppressed, and the relics of vulgar gaming

will be that his money may become scattered. It is little better than a windfall, and is generally received accordingly.

are at Newmarket, Doncaster, Epsom, &c. whilst French lotteries are drawn three times monthly, and the low scheme allows the *canaille* to risk their mites; urchins play for sous in the cellars of the Palais Royal, and every fête has its raffle, as often the pam loos at our Brighton libraries. Neither do the English gamesters drown themselves in the park basin, or in Rosamond's pond, as the French do in their Seine; but this predilection is to be traced in other features of national character.

Had I been disposed to dabble in the *wealth of nations*, or the cold calculations of political economy, the corner of St. James's-street would have been a good point, the whole street a *studio*, and the splendid hotel pile, with Mr. Hoby's book of debts, would have proved important items. With less trouble and more precision than the site of Carthage was determined, I drew, in my mind's eye, a quadrangle of fashion, within whose sides the greatest of her sons might live and die, or build a wall, *à la Chinois*, to exclude the vulgar herd of

mankind. To him who is not familiar with the topography of fashion, this plan may not be unacceptable. Taking it for granted that he has studied under William of Wykham, the manners that maketh the man, his exterior equipments may, at call, be assembled from St. James's-street; his experience bought in its dicing-houses and hotels; and his foreign travels picked up in its libraries, from travellers who never moved from their native city. In Pall Mall he may receive the courtly polish of a royal bend, and, in happy ignorance, listen to the exotic witchery of the opera; marshal his limbs in Waterloo-place; and supply the grosser wants of sense from the store-houses of Piccadilly: while the noble and hallowed ground of St. James's-square remains for the nucleus, or centre. In this delightful region of imprisonment, he would not feel the silver fetters nor the silken slavery of fashion. His sensibilities would not be shocked with the vulgar exhibitions of labour, the groanings of toil, or the abortive affectation of mean birth. Here he might worship his golden

idol, and,ameleon-like, feed upon the voluptuous meltings of smiles, and sighs, and tears.

I continued prowling westward, where the same aristocratic gloom rendered the whole region a desert, barren of out door incident or interest. Nothing was to be heard but the occasional rattle of a carriage, the clatter of its horses, and the *brutum fulmen* of an officious footman, with the iron lungs of a street-door knocker, with whose monotony I did not feel much gratified. Berkeley and Grosvenor-squares appeared to shrink from the vulgar blaze of gas, and the scene altogether was growing too sombre for one whose spirits began to flow in a fiercer vein. I accordingly returned by way of Piccadilly, where industry seemed extinct, but many busy heads were doubtless still racking on sleepless pillows, with all the fear and disquietude of money-getting, and whose ledgers and diaries were the only accounts rendered of their past day. But the semblance was that of quiet.

The passengers were "few and far between," and had the eye been spared the disgusting display of their weakness, perhaps the imagination would have suffered less. Still, the philosopher who would study mankind in the street, must not shrink from such scenes, however hideous their outlines and colours may be. They are part and parcel of human nature; and though their exhibition may excite pain, they are fraught with healthy food for a reflective mind: but the sickening student of humanity stands little chance of becoming master of his subject.

As I drew near to the termination of Piccadilly, by Coventry-street, I began to prepare myself for an entire change of scene. It appeared like returning from a desert to a thickly-peopled country, or rather from slumbering industry to the busy haunts of wantoning and wasting life. Regent-street and the Quadrant, the favourite evening promenade of foreigners, (who alone seem to appreciate their archi-

tectural splendour) were fast merging into quiet, in part from the early habits of their frequenters; but as I proceeded from thence, the freshness of evening still shone forth at every turn, and scores of passengers seemed to have just burst from their dark chrysalis-state, and, like the gayest moth of nature, to have just flown on mealy wings to this garden of sweets. In truth, no part of London is more degenerate than Leicester-square and Soho, when we consider that the former was once the residence of some of the proudest sons of art, and even of royalty; and the fact of its being a comparatively new neighbourhood does not argue for the morality of the times. But genius and talent, or the fondest reminiscences of their greatness, cannot rule fashion, however they may attract her, else the celebrity of this quarter would have been more lasting. Other causes probably contributed to its first desertion, and so short was the interval of its degradation, that we need no longer wonder at the waste of antiquity,

when similar change is perceptibly going on before us. Cities neither rise nor fall "in a day;" but instances of such rapid decay as the foregoing, show us by comparison, how this earth of ours is frittered away by piecemeal, and how the whim of fashion effects part of the wreck and dissolution of the material world.

The critical conversation of the opposite passengers soon reminded me that the theatres had, in the common phrase, "broken up,"* and that it was high carnival time in their neighbourhood. It was a sorry scene. All the noise and bustle of petty slavery were at work; from the footmen of rank to the yellings and bawlings of helpers, who officiously anticipated the wants of such as were unattended. Nothing could exceed the din and clamour of the scene: scores of

* What a convenient term is this "break up:" all must remember it, every day, from their infancy. It is applied to good and evil news; we "break up" first at school, and last in old age; and these dates, with the intervening "breaking down," seem to comprehend the whole catalogue of human pleasure and pain.

elegantly-dressed females were hurrying like Cinderella after the ball, or as from a pest-house, and picking their road to coaches ; then came the link-bearer for his fee, with anxious features gleaming through the copper flame of his torch. In the halls of the theatres was the usual description of waiting groupes and avenues, while at the doors crowds were looking out for partners in sin, and others were enviously gazing on the luxurious clothing of the carriage company. The pit poured forth its well-dressed crowd, and whilst some were securing themselves from the chilling damp of the night air, others were planning the future movements of the evening. The galleries, too, ejected their visitors, sinking in appearance as they rose in station—from second-rate respectability to the spume and spawn of profligacy : here was the best study ; some faces were still lit up with the remains of the farce-laugh, others bore the symptoms of recklessness and disappointment, and on a greater portion delight was still shining through ex-

haustion with heat and struggle. And how dearly might this little luxury have been purchased: some were almost shoeless and in rags, others were neglected and dirty; and probably, the majority would, for this night's diversion, forego a meal or two, or, still worse, persuade themselves into habitual vice, at the charge of conscience, and the cost of crime. But such inconsistencies, on a larger scale, are hourly practised by all ranks, and fits of pleasure resemble those of anger—whose only preventive is premeditation. Were men to adopt this resolve, appetite would fly off, or feast upon air, and passion exhaust itself to inanity.*

* The excesses to which the English people extend their recreations, (if they may be so called without a perversion of the term) formerly almost amounted to a national reproach; but they are gradually disappearing. Under this head are included the affectation of the great, in appearing at half a dozen routs in one night; and in middle life, the sin of gormandizing and drunkenness, vices which are becoming ungenteel, and descending to the *canaille*. But there is a species of intoxication nearly as much indulged as ever—that of dancing all night, to suffer from exhaustion and rheumatism on the following day—an evil easy of remedy, by such amusement being more frequent and less protracted. The

But the last to depart—whose lingerings resembled those of birds of prey beside a spoil, bespoke pity not unmixed with shame. They were the dregs, the gall, and the wormwood, of the mixture, and at which every thing but the flame of rank passion would recoil. In these cases, where the consciences of men resemble mirrors, how painfully strong must be the reflection of precipitate error. Passion is the consuming fire of the soul ; untameable in its excesses, and unquenchable in its fury, it tortures its victims, till it leaves them, like burnt-out volcanoes, melancholy memorials of the last shock of nature !

Such were my meditations as I paced the almost deserted piazza of Covent-garden. The *genius loci* appeared to feed and foster my melancholy musings ; and in the absence of better studies, the name and premises

influence on the character would probably be that of rendering it more even, in the admixture of business and pleasure being more proportional. As it is, nearly all the excellencies of the English lie in questionable extremes.

of Robins, the celebrated auctioneer, would have called up many recollections of the instability of wealth, and the unenviable incertitude of possession, if it be not pushing the *vraisemblance* too far. But these were not moments for mere comparisons, when so many realities were at hand.

As the night advanced, the strollers appeared more degraded and reckless in appearance and conduct. The scene became like the parting shadows of a masquerade, and its revel shouts resembled those of victory and death, in more senses than one—for, as reason yielded, passion triumphed. Occasionally there passed a few well-dressed young men, whose boisterous mirth vented itself in stray snatches of glees and airs, like the yeast of fermenting liquors, working to the top; then the good-natured dispute; and the disguised heart, with its outpourings of generosity before justice—the jolly laugh—the indiscriminate welcome which would have the whole world for one table—the eyes flashing in their sockets

between reason and incontinence—the self-confident *walk*, that would have the whole street for a path—and, lastly, the unconstrained glory of free-will, the only return for all this proffered liberality. About these sons of pleasure, there flitted and danced a few of the shadows of frailer nature, with

Calling shapes and beckoning shadows dire,
And aery tongues that syllable men's names.

As I wandered about the theatres,

Whence even now the tumult of loud mirth
Was rife, and perfect in my listening ear,

I found, that however thin the passengers became abroad, the strong light that would feign show itself through blinds and chinks of insecure shutters, denoted that the scene was only shifted; and doors unwilling to be closed, or stealthily opened, and as secretly shut, satisfied me that admittance, if a special favour, could be procured, if not “on demand—at sight.” My protracted stroll, and its consequent fatigue, soon convinced me

that, like the forms I had been contemplating, I, too, was mortal, and that sentiment was not the staple of life; again I thought of

Serâque revertens

Nocte domum dapibus mensas onerabat inemptis.

But the vain-glory of a sated appetite ill accorded with my narrow-souled street philosophy, which now began to relax, and to exemplify Johnson's maxim, that there are few people who do not practise what they cease to censure. Festive luxury, just at its best pitch, and the chance-meeting of a fellow wanderer, who, like myself, could "suck melancholy from a song"—could not be resisted, notwithstanding many involuntary glances towards the clock, which now became an odious spot on this scene of sunshine. There was a decent display of dress and gallantry, and of good manners, but the seasoning of wit was wanting: and for all this show of pleasure, few would suffer besides those present, so long as anxious parents and unfortunate tailors, could be

kept in happy ignorance, or, like Dermody's clothier, be satisfied with an expostulation—but not in verse. So long as they ran their whirl, and feasted their vanity at their own expense, the evil might, perhaps, work its cure, till exhausted nature cut short the little thread of their folly. After a certain season of life, even the *variety* of such scenes is unchanging; but when the thirst of appetite is slaked, and the charm is over, we arrive at the golden gain of experience and reflexion, and we then learn to regard others in similar positions, with the same indifference that men behold insects dancing in the sun-beam. On these matters some affect a puritanical delicacy, while others enlarge on them at the expense of truth: it should, however, be remembered, that none but fools will show their own vanity; notwithstanding many seeming wise, by flattering the world, contrive to come in for a share of their own praise.

However prurient might be the scene around us, and however deeply men might

be staking at the game of life—the passion for money-getting play was stifled; but, alas! the links in the fetters of vice are so finely wrought, that the present might be but a connecting link with the cares of chance, and the mere fragment of a scheme of vice.

* * * * *

A rumbling stir abroad soon reminded us that the day of labour was commencing, and that Nature scorned disobedient man in his night of pleasure. Tired with the heat and glare of gas and lamps, and of the mimicry of life, I again returned to the street. But here, how changed the scene. The frosty air of morning began to nip my bones, in spite of all my provision, and day was just gleaming through scattered clouds, as if to show the blank faces of revellers—pale with disgust. How I envied those who, just bursting into industry, were happy indeed, when compared with the feverish patient of luxury, just at his last ebb of enjoyment. But, probably, they in turn

envied my pleasure, so fondly do men cling to the fallacies of life.

It would be tedious, not to say repulsive, to fill up the outline of the midnight orgies, which I have here attempted to sketch ; and though the preceding pages be but snatches from scenes worthy of the Hogarth of our own times, it seldom happens that they are drawn, to use a term of art, with good effect. On the contrary, men are either terrified with their darkness, or dazzled with their light, and they thus lose much of the interesting amusement of contemplating *motley life*. In my progress, I saw the offscourings of vice at a distance, but avoided them unharmed ; and saving the exhaustion of the night, I suffered but little inconvenience. Mine may be an odd taste, but were all mankind unlike me, their misgivings would serve as mere sport for each other. Such as do not treasure up first impressions, but suffer them to glide off unheeded, will ruin themselves in witnessing

the folly of others ; but they who retain such impressions, may enjoy

Mens sana, in corpore sano ;

if they have but the good fortune to possess a common share of fortitude. Sensibility will sicken, and be frozen or scorched amidst such scenes: indeed, she resembles an exotic, which it were best to shelter from frost and sunshine, and lock up at nightfall, since her delicate form cannot withstand the inclemency of the—world or weather: she can only vegetate in sickly pride within doors.

Village Character.

God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.—*Sterne.*

EMMA ——— was born about the year 1778, in the humble village of Merstone, situate in one of the most picturesque districts of the south of England. As the rural life of that period is now only to be found in neglected books, or traced on the canvas of contemporary artists, memory can alone supply the deficiency. As a road-side village, Merstone is, however, still unusually interesting. The *street* lies in a gentle valley, terminated at one end by an iron gate, opening into the pleasure grounds of a modern mansion-house, erected by the

descendants of one of the most opulent families in the county ; but the old cottage-residence still remains, and in its snugness and rural comfort presents a striking contrast with the upstart splendour of its more favoured rival. The present proprietor, or “squire,” (for, in spite of all innovation, he retains this primitive title) is the representative of an ancient northern family. In early life he signalized himself in the British expedition to Egypt: he is now a parliament man, or one of those plain country gentlemen, whose tutelar eloquence seldom travels out of the county which they represent. The success which attended his foreign enterprize, seems to have stimulated him with similar thirst for civil conquest. At Merstone, during his boyhood, in the beautiful allegory of Scripture, “every man sat under his own fig-tree ;” and the neighbourhood consisted of those dear inheritances of independence, small farms, which were chiefly cultivated and occupied by their owners. War, the common foe of

mankind, broke up this tranquil scene : in its host of evils came the monopolization of landed property, mortgage brought up the rear of misery, and hence, in various parts of England, parishes became consolidated into so many estates. To this ruinous system, the village of Merstone, with few exceptions, was sacrificed ; and a consequent revolution has followed. The majority of that useful class of men, termed “ small farmers,” to use the cant language of the day, have been “ sold off,” and their property “ thrown together,” and confided to a steward. Again, the villagers have been coaxed into compliance with every fastidious request of their squire : public roads have been stopped up, or turned, and even their street has been crossed and bounded with a gate, to suit his convenience. In the meantime, the same spirit of monopoly has shown itself in a thousand other forms. The squire has turned speculator in rail-roads,* canals, and bridges ; whilst

* It is almost impossible for the lover of the country to

his tenantry are impoverished, and the peace of rural life is neglected for lucrative distinction in national improvement. He, however, maintains a large establishment, though not upon the hospitable scale of his ancestors; and he still indulges a proverbial fondness for the chase, which, being hale and hearty, he may long continue, should he not become too closely beset with the trammels and anxieties of his commercial speculations.

A short distance from this lordly domain,

conceive a more unsightly picture, than is caused by human contrivance straining to omnipotence, and disfiguring the beautiful face of Nature, with what may be termed the mutilations of Art. The invention of man is indeed insatiate, and its stages of perfection raise his life into so many little triumphs, secure but for a moment, and then to be broken up by the perfection of others—the embryo of a minute, or, at best, the creature of an hour, with a glory as tender as the brain that gave it birth, and an existence as insecure as that of its originator. To cut up picturesque countries with inventions, supersedable within the next hour, almost amounts to wantonness, especially as man cannot at pleasure replace the harmony which he thus disturbs. When the squire has become tired of luxuriant vales, and ploughs them up with iron rail-roads, within view of his own window, the chance is that better feelings are in like manner narrowed, and passions more dangerous than vanity indulged, in this perversion of taste.

a broad gravelled walk across a beautiful paddock, passes the parsonage-house and its apple-orchard of productive celebrity, and leads to the church. These are almost the only wrecks, that time has spared, of the once happy village of Merstone; for the reproductiveness of the orchard, and the outline of the church, are fresh in the memory of the oldest villager. The parsonage is withal a comfortable building, in its improvements and additions, exhibiting the studied convenience of many occupants. The lawn, shrubbery, and flower-garden, which front the house, are in trim taste, the whole has an appearance of rural neatness, well adapted for a life of calm contemplation. The rector is upwards of threescore, and his silver locks and faltering voice denote the length of his services; whilst a volume of sermons, published a few years since, has obtained for him a literary distinction among the clergy of the county.

The church and church-yard are pecu-

liarly interesting, from their structure and situation; but I reserve their description for the present. They nearly adjoin the high-road, which has been formed within these twenty years, and crosses *the street* of the village. Here resides a stone-mason, whose employment has kept pace with the mortality of his fellow-villagers, but whose Phidian fame has never travelled beyond the confines of a country church-yard; a blacksmith, whose hammer has lingered on the same anvil during the last forty years; a public-house, or second-rate inn, whose sign was, perhaps, chosen as a compliment to passing royalty; a wheel-wright's shed and yard, with half-finished wheels and un-repaired waggons; a *shop*, whose stores once supplied nearly all the wants of the village; and an errand-cart resting on its shafts, which weekly trafficks to and from London, and formerly conveyed one of the town evils, in the tempting lottery scheme, displayed on the tilt. There is, too, a farmhouse, of the better description, still saved

from the agricultural wreck to which I have already alluded,—with its adjoining yard, barns, and ricks ; and a little pond darkened by an aged beech-tree, and unenclosed from the road. Within my recollection, the farm-house was the abode of hospitality ; I mean of that good cheer which once glowed around the hearts of English farmers, and entitled them to the honourable distinction of yeomen. But such charms have long been eclipsed by the *ignes fatui*, the false lights, of innovation and refinement ; whilst this perversion of liberality to conceited extravagance has been erroneously attributed to bad times. I remember one family as the finest and most numerous in Merstone : the girls were beauties, in the purest sense of the term—such as we are wont to see, in paintings and prints, crowned with milk-pails, at morn and eve, with ruddy cheeks and flowing hair, and eyes laughing with maiden simplicity :

As lamps burn silent, with unconscious light,
So modest ease in beauty shines more bright :

Unaiming charms with edge resistless fall,
And she who means no mischief does it all—*A. Hill.*

—lovely as a novelist would have his heroine
—all perfection, and in one year winning
more love by their unpretending singleness
of heart, than the vain beauty of fashion is
able to extort from crowds of idolizing fol-
lowers, during her whole life. Well do I
remember the time when one of this
groupe played with my long golden hair, and
fondly petted me by the hour ; now hiding
and seeking with me in the green alleys
and nooks of the shrubbery, next rolling me
on the lawn, or helping me to clamber a
spreading apple-tree, in the orchard. Then,
too, would I disturb her newly-arranged
hair or dress, till, tired with my urchin
waggery, her fine dark eyes tried to frown
me into shame. Then the little periodical
treats on birth-days, &c. with the garlanded
bowls of syllabub and creamed fruits. Alas!
this is but one of the many retrospective
dreams of childhood, which memory now
calls up to cheat sorrow of a smile ! The

boys of the family were likewise well-looking, and with their sisters, drew around them scores of admirers. But the stronger sex proved the weakest in error. Two of the boys rode high-bred horses, flourished at the fairs and markets of the neighbouring towns, and, by frequent visits to London, learned to swagger and drink wine in the market-room, and astonish the simple villagers at home with the airs of fine gentlemen; and by way of finish, one became a bit of a soldier. At harvest-homes and christenings, too, they surprised rather than amused the company, whose harmony thus became endangered. Marriage and death, the disjoiner of the best families and friends, at length separated this numerous groupe to their several fates and fortunes in life; but to pursue them further is not my present purpose.

On the opposite side of the street are several cottage-like dwellings, with broad-eaved tiled roofs, and casements with their panes blinded with the leaves of old vines; the en-

trances being down a step. In one of these ill-contrived abodes, lives the parish-clerk, who to his professional calling, adds that of a carpenter, and thus between the spiritual and temporal wants of the villagers, has dwelt here upwards of forty years. One of his neighbours is a retailer of tarts and toys, as well known to the children of the place, as Barbara Allen once was at Oxford, or Gunter is to the Londoners or “children of a larger growth.” Another neighbour is an old dealer in, and rearer of, singing-birds, with a confused idea of herbs and simples; she is indeed a most important personage, among bird-fanciers and the sick portion of the village. Now we reach the squire’s formidable gate, and the street ends, if we except the foundation walls of some houses which have been pulled down to gratify the great man’s caprice, and which remind the neighbours that he has “bid money” for their dwellings, for similar work of destruction.

Towards the eastern extremity of the

village, there are also some genteel residences, and some old specimens of cottage rusticity, the latter with mouldering thatched roofs and diminutive casements, fronted by well-stocked strips of garden, and partially hidden by aged trees, stretching their moss-crusted limbs in every direction. They are, for the most part, approached by rude time-worn steps, up a lofty bank,—past which the road winds by a steeply-descending lane, overhung with dense trees, narrowing into almost impervious gloom, and at length spreading forth across a small green or common, till it again narrows through a rich succession of grass lands, and stretches away past a handsome court or manor-house, and a battlemented church tower, rising from a group of massy trees ; a mile from whence is the next village. Altogether, this is one of the most delightful bye-roads with which I am acquainted, although it is better calculated for the equestrian than for the carriage tourist ; it being in many places steep, and not en-

tirely free from sand-springs. In the neighbourhood are some pits of fuller's earth, (silver mines to their owners) and, in some parts of the road, the steep banks present many interesting varieties of sandstone, stained with oxidized iron veins, crowned with a light superstratum or soil, with tufted grass, and the wild clothing of luxuriant nature.

At one of the angles of the road, I recollect, a few years since, stood the mere shell of a brick mansion, tenanted only by the fowls of the air, with its window-frames falling out by piecemeal. It had, however, been a seat of some importance, as was denoted by its fish-ponds and ivied fountains; but at that time it presented a sad wreck of neglect and decay. Another dwelling, though apparently of the same age and description, has shared a better fate, still retaining much of that substantial comfort which we usually infer from a heavy red-brick exterior of the time of William III.—with its walnut-trees and walled court-yards.

Among the most cheerful and genteel of the cottage dwellings at Merstone, may be mentioned the glazier's, with its newly-painted paling, protecting a thick hedge of sweet-briar, and enclosing a profusion of holly-hocks and rose-trees, which rise from box-edged beds and borders of flowers. The "boarding-school for young ladies" is a modern appendage which has sprung up with the refinement of the times ; its exterior is, indeed, as trim and neat as its inmates. The street of the village is, however, broken by an unsightly toll-house and gate, an interruption to which most travellers, whether horse or foot, must object.

Within the parish are some valuable quarries of stone, (whence the name of the village) which were once in possession of the crown ; and according to antiquarian authority, a patent of Edward III. is still preserved, empowering certain persons to dig stone here for the use of Windsor Castle, and ordering the sheriff to assist and apprehend such men as should refuse to work,

and send them prisoners to Windsor—a tolerable specimen of feudal aristocracy. From its resistance to fire it is called firestone ; it is soft when brought from the quarry, but hardens in the air. With the abundance and celebrity* of this material, it might be expected that it would form the principal building material at Merstone, which might thus, in neatness, rival some of the beautiful villages of Essex : such, however, is not the case, many of the houses being of red brick ; but this variety adds to the pleasing character of the village street.

The whole spot is sheltered by a portion of the bold range of chalk hills which stretches across the county of Surrey ; in this direction is a lane consecrated by the feet of numerous pilgrims, in their progress from the west, to visit the shrine of Becket, at

* The magnificent chapel of Henry VII., at Westminster, is built of this stone ; in repairing and renovating the exterior of which so much time is occupied, that before the whole is finished, the portion first commenced will have resumed much of the indistinctness of antiquity—so satirical is time in mocking the boasted perfection of human art !

Canterbury ; and tradition has assigned to this hallowed spot the name of *Pilgrim's Lane*.

But were I to proceed in enumerating the many delightful scenes of rural repose with which this neighbourhood abounds, my readers might forget the village character which I have already attempted to sketch. I must, however, mention a decayed borough, said to have been once an important town, with privileges which have preserved its name in election eloquence, and have even rendered it a bye-word and laughing-stock for corruption and disgrace. Its patron resides in a showy mansion, on the verge of a variegated park, and he seems to share the unpopularity which is attached to the borough. Nevertheless, the park is of extraordinary beauty, and from one of its gates the prospect extends over the cultivated districts and the wilds of Surrey and Sussex, to the blue horizon of the South Downs.

When Emma was a little girl, the ladies

of the village usually passed their mornings in visiting the cottages of the sick ; and almost every poor family had its patroness. Nearly a mile from Merstone, a narrow lane branches off the high road to the sequestered hamlet of Chepstone, about half a mile distant. Here are a small green, a few cottages, and a farm-house, with a church almost overgrown with affectionate ivy, embosomed in the dense foliage of trees ; in a substantial brick mansion adjoining which, resided an old gentleman, who having amassed a princely fortune in India, was, in the harmless satire of the day, termed a nabob. He had three maiden daughters, and in this comfortable retreat they passed the greatest part of the year ; for rural life was not then as it is now among the wealthy,

Whose lives are others, not their own ;

neither were they chained by fashion to pass the spring and summer in London. The family lived in good style ; but the respect in which they were held by the villagers did not border on that cold and servile con-

duct which the opulence of the great and the sordid interests of the little, sometimes dictate in such neighbourhoods. It was rather the warm effect of gratitude, and that high esteem which should always reciprocate with true benevolence, and in part reconcile the distant relationship of wealth and humble virtue.

The retiring modesty and unassuming simplicity of Emma's demeanour, soon attracted the notice of these benefactresses, and through their bounty she received the rudiments of her education, a mark of favor to which more consequence was attached in those days, inasmuch as the expense was greater, and the opportunities were less frequent, than at present ; for there were no Sunday schools, and reading and writing were then enviable accomplishments among adults. Emma was accordingly received into the "great house" at Chestonstone, as a kind of pet companion for the ladies, a distinction to which the children of lowly parents even now are not unfrequently

recommended by correct conduct and personal appearance,—qualifications which caused Emma to be selected from the villagers of Merstone. At length, the old gentleman died, the estate was let or sold, and the three daughters left Chepstone; two went abroad, and the third on a permanent visit to a relation; or, to be brief, they, what is termed, gave up housekeeping.

I have already alluded to the personal attractions of Emma: in figure she was rather petite, but of regularly-proportioned form; her features might be called pretty, and they were lit up by cheerfulness; and, in the language of the poet, she was “industrious, modest, quiet, neat.” She was now confided by her mother to the care of an aunt in London, where she soon engaged the attention of the other sex, and before she had reached the age of twenty, she attracted the affections of William ———. He is described to me, by those who well recollect him, as tall and well made, with a fine open countenance, and dark luxuriant

hair. But his eyes were not the index of his heart: for a time they bespoke ardent attachment to their favored object, but they lacked sincerity, that jewel which is set in the *eyes and hearts* of true lovers. His constancy in love did not equal his warmth in the service to which he belonged; and, unlike the loves which are so artlessly told in the ballads and ditties of sea-life, he inherited their misgivings without their fidelity; but faster than his heart

Did make offence, his eye did heal it up.

Emma LOVED him;* but like a froward child, his affections strayed, and his wanderings often flushed her maiden cheek, and steeped her eyes in the tears of grief. He took his long and last farewell,—when, a few months after he had sailed, Emma received the intelligence of his wreck;

So sad, so tender, and so true.

* Certain impressions received in these moments, are never effaced. The few hours that William passed in Emma's company, he sometimes cheered by singing the

I shall not attempt to describe the days and nights of concealed anguish that followed ; for this has baffled the plaintiveness of poetry. Love is, indeed, “ all trial, all observance ; ” but where the affection of woman seeks to reclaim the nobler sex from error, its anxieties are doubled : when that object is accomplished, the joy is unspeakable, but when hope and life are cut off at one blow, the sickenings of anxiety are but as past dreams of bliss.

* * * * *

Emma lived in what is sometimes distinguished as southern London, then the principal entrance of that quarter to the metropolis, but now considered as one of its main streets. A church, which at that time stood isolated, is now surrounded with knots of murky streets, lanes, and alleys, or dwellings

most popular sea-ballads of that time. Such were Gay's inimitable “ Black-eyed Susan,” Dibdin's “ Plough-boy,” and a few others of the same cast. He had a musical voice ; that of Emma, too, was flexible and sweet ; and I have often heard her repeat the chorus lines of *these songs*, but seldom have I heard her hum the air of any other.

blackened with the atmosphere, so as to resemble the abodes of many previous generations. In those days, too, the south bank of the Thames supplied its adjacent counties with merchandize; and a *journey* (for such it might be called) to Tyburn, then resembled the passage from Dover to Calais, or a steam voyage across the Atlantic, in our age; so rapid, but imperceptible, are the strides and changes which art and time effect in the intellectual habits of a great portion of mankind. At the period to which I have alluded, the above district was more like a large market or county town, than a part of the metropolis; and thousands were born, and died there, without ever migrating three miles north, east, or west, which, on the other hand, characterises the minds of a different class of thinkers. Waggon were the ordinary conveyances,—and coaches, which were then considered as triumphs of locomotive skill, both in construction and pace, would cut but a sorry figure with a modern Brighton outfit,

or with many subordinate vehicles which ebb and flow through this line of streets, with every whirl round the dial of St. Paul's. Now I fear that I have travelled out of my record.

But the gloom of the first untoward event of Emma's life at length cleared off before the vivacity of youth and artless beauty.

From the faint outline of Emma's first love, it will be readily expected that her good qualities did not fail to awaken a kindred sympathy, perhaps somewhat quickened by that interesting charm which unrequited confidence not unfrequently lends to personal attractions. Happily, in this case, the frown of melancholy fled before the brighter beams of untutored affection ; and in noticing the circumstance of Emma becoming the object of three rivals, simultaneously, it is gratifying to add, that so far as their integrity has been proved by their subsequent success in life—on whichever suitor Emma's choice might have

fallen, each would have been found equal in his commendatory claims to her hand. It is too often only the *theory* of love to sink the advantages of birth and fortune, and forget them in reciprocal affection ; and this system of happiness has long since been proved to be equally fallacious with every other scheme of human certainty. Such expectations, if not chivalric, do not belong to this age of calculation ; they have long been laid asleep, and the doctrine of self-love works too powerfully in men's minds to admit a chance of their frequent resuscitation. How refinement has brought about this modern reform in the course of human sympathies, must be left to the decision of the metaphysical enquirer ; but certes, it extends throughout the chain of civilization—from the earliest germ of common friendship to the finest web of interwoven affections. If the comparison be not too ludicrous, the relation of such appeals to the heart often resembles the faulty construction of some obsolete machine and

its appendages, in the communication of which there are too many cranks, points, or stages, to admit of calculating the effect or result.

Harding, the choice of Emma's second love, was in age and station her equal. He was a native of Northampton, and, like many of his brethren still further north, he came to better his fortune among the south-erns of London. In person he was well formed; in address frank and manly; with an open and expressive set of features, which well bespoke the generosity of his heart. These are, perhaps, the most fortunate of Nature's bounties for an introduction to middle life; and, if physiognomists be right, they are best entitled to our confidence. Industry and success are probably as often found under other characteristics, but such good fortune is then less easily attained; it is often but up-hill work, whilst companionable qualities, or an agreeable exterior, not unfrequently prepossess, and thus lighten labour, and smooth difficulty into a pleasant

exercise of genius. It is a principle of early nature to allow fondling, coaxing, and persuasion, to accomplish many purposes which more apparent influence will defeat ; and in almost every hour of our lives we illustrate the universal application of this maxim. By this reason, men of tyrannical dispositions usually defeat themselves, and become self-tormentors ; though perchance they have ignorance and pride to bolster up their weakness, and persuade themselves into rash experiments on mankind, which at length end in their ruin. But simplicity, or singleness of heart and purpose, will, in nineteen out of twenty cases, effect more than cunning, with all her cameleon cheateries and trapwork machinery. Beauty, it is acknowledged, is oftener a lure to misfortune than a handmaid to welfare ; but all her charms fade, wither, and die, or, at best, are but as false gilding of art and study, without beauty or purity of heart. Were this principle better recognized, vice would be left to her own

deformity, and the *beautiful* become synonymous with clear perfection.

A short courtship brought about a happy union. With a family came an increase of fortune. Emma still retained the same humility that adorned her childhood; comfort succeeded the early practice of self-denial, and the prosperity of this amiable pair just appeared complete, when disease broke in upon their halcyon days, and began to overcloud their future prospects. Harding fell a victim to acute bodily suffering, which usually confined him to his chamber upwards of one-third of each subsequent year. In these hours of racking anguish, Emma mingled her sweet consolation, and in these scenes of conjugal tenderness, how finely were their affections blended: his care was her care—her joy was his joy; how affecting are such touches of

Sorrow unfeigned, and humiliation meek.

These afflicting visitations continued upwards of twenty years, when nature, worn

out with pain and suffering, sunk beneath the burthen—and Harding was no more !

I had been for some time absent from town, and did not see Harding eight months previous to his death. His last attack confined him to his bed-room six weeks, when being somewhat recovered, he was, a few days previous to his decease, removed into his dining-room. Here he was seen by a friend whom I deputed to call on him, and who described him, personally, as the “ruin of a fine man.” He appeared to be much concerned for his wife and family, whilst he hastily summed up the principal incidents of the latter years of his life ; but he neither exhibited symptoms, nor expressed any fear, of approaching dissolution. On the following morning, however, during one of those precious intervals in which death so often surprises his victims, slight fits of apoplexy nipped the fine thread, already spun out with the subtlety of human contrivance, so as to have flattered with hope of recovery.

Emma and her little circle, five in number, were now plunged into the deepest sorrow : for a time her affliction bordered on distraction, and “ she refused to be comforted ;” but the consolation of her friends, and the affectionate caresses of her children, aided by the balm of pious resignation, were apparently efficacious. At the desire of Emma, Harding was buried in the church-yard of her native village, Merstone ; for the rites and associations of a London funeral did not harmonize with the simplicity of her feelings. How fondly did she cling to every reminiscence of Harding, that could endear him to her memory ! thus, the idea of conveying his cold remains from the distraction of a city to the peaceful shade of a village church-yard, momentarily relieved the poignancy of her sufferings ; for in the overflow of her affection she attached an importance to the place of interment, which enjoined tranquillity, and rest from the busy strife of the world. We can trace this

concern for the dead among the lives of our earliest ancestors ; not to speak of the interesting honors which the fathers of the Christian church were wont to pay the grave-stones of the dead ; in which pleasing ceremony they placed baskets of lilies, violets, and roses, on the graves of husbands and wives. And in our times such customs are not entirely forgotten, except in crowded and ungenial cities. I well remember the day of Harding's burial. It was a pensive morning in October, a period when nature begins to sadden, and to remind us of the approach of winter. The sky was one sheet of melancholy overcast. The trees and hedges had just begun to shed their leaves, which being whirled about by occasional gusts of wind, proved their strict analogy to the fleeting course of man : and this too, on the high road to a luxurious watering-place, along which, at intervals, carriages passed in all the ostentatious bustle and splendour of toil and fashion. I saw the funeral approach. The little bell sent forth its deepest knell,

(with the wind) audible at a mile from the church ; and as the gloomy train wound round the hill, the windows of the few straggling cottages on the road side were crowded with the heads of young and old, with all that inconsistent curiosity which leads men to regard such scenes like passing shadows, for which they feel but momentary concern.

A church may be called the gem of village scenery ; and such is the humble church of Merstone. It stands on a gentle knoll, and its shingled spire is discernible for several miles round. It abounds with various orders of architecture, among which the rude Saxon arch, and the tracery of pointed windows predominate. The interior is spacious, but if we except the pews of the squire's and a few other families, it is far from commodious. There is a large gallery, in which the unmusical psalmody of our forefathers is set and sung. A few verses from the Old and New Testament, (as helps to the duties of social life,) are

written on the walls, which in the angles, and near the windows, are discoloured with the dank of the ivy and evergreens clinging to their exterior. Some rude oaken rails enclose a small area at the top of the middle aisle, and beneath a window, whose light is dimmed with ivy, is placed by way of altar-piece, a well-executed French engraving, on nine sheets, about six feet high and five wide, beside which are the ten commandments, &c. with the communion table underneath. This is indeed a hallowed spot, for here many a beating heart has been set at rest. The reading-desk and pulpit are of rudely carved oak, with an old date nearly effaced; and over the pulpit is a representation of the king's arms in *fresco*. There is too, near the principal door, a font of a square block of highly-polished Sussex-marble, lined with lead, and elevated on a pillar of the same material. From its capaciousness it rather resembles a small bath, being sufficiently excavated to dip an infant. There is no further attempt at internal de-

coration; and notwithstanding some folks call it “a barn of a place,” it is far more dévotional than any of the churches built in the present day.

The exterior is not uninteresting. Churchwardens’ alterations, as stopping up and opening doors and windows, are pretty numerous, and to judge by these specimens, every score of years has its school of architecture. The whole pile is in a dilapidated condition: the stones of the tower are disjointed, and according to tradition, they shake when the peal of four bells is rung; and there are a few slabs on the battlemented coping which have threatened to fall during the last seven years: the several abutments are in the same ruinous state, and are falling by piecemeal; and to judge from recent vestry squabbles about rates and bell repairs, little can be expected towards the renovation of this venerable pile. The valley forms the church-yard, bounded on one side by a rookery, and on the other by elms, intermixed with sombre yews and

firs. It is altogether pensively picturesque ;
and there have I, in the innocent hours of
boyhood, loved to

Pluck the frail flowers that gaily bloom
And cast them, as they fade away
In garlands on my — tomb :

Here too could I now trace the generations
of Emma's family, surrounded with the sar-
cophagus of rank, the gilt-lettered marble
slab, the railed vault, and the time-worn
wooden rail—all spotted with moss, or dis-
coloured with the green mark of antiquity.
And this crowd of mementos of human
frailty—this scene of mortal repose—lay
close to the full tide of a fashionable haunt.

The road to the church-yard winds round
the hill or shelving bank, almost overgrown
with weeds and high grass, and the entrance
to the church-yard is by a flight of stone steps
leading to a hatch-gate. Here the proces-
sion was met by several of Emma's relatives.
At respectful distances stood little groupes
of women and children silently, observing
the ceremony—from tottering age to hushed

childhood—so forcibly do the emblems of death strike into the heart, inasmuch as every one, at some period of his existence, acknowledges their effect.

I shall mention only one incident of the funeral, and that because, if ever the influence of superstition be sweet to the soul, it is in moments like the present. Birds are amusing creatures, and their economy is an epitome of mankind ; but the robin is one of the most favoured of birds ; and its habits are recorded in some of the sweetest stanzas of poesy.* The service in the church had scarcely commenced, when a robin flew in at the door, and perching itself in the niche of a window, began to warble its woodland notes, and was immediately joined by another robin without the same window. These

* I could easily adduce many hundred examples ; but the beautiful one of Collins, in the dirge, sung over the grave of Fidele, (in *Cymbeline*) will suffice :

The redbreast oft, at evening hour,
Shall kindly lend his little aid,
With hoary moss, and gather'd flowers,
To deck the ground, where thou art laid.

plaintive choristers continued to make the church re-echo with their shrill strains throughout the ceremony. The robin had been Harding's favourite bird, and the association of this circumstance, with the above slender incident, if weakness, was pardonable in such a moment.

In this hour of trial, Emma appeared to bear her loss with fortitude ; but it left a corroding care within her breast, which embittered the remainder of her life. Her fine feelings were doubly quickened ; her heart sorrowed within itself ; and her peace of mind appeared to have fled for ever :

In every shadow, every blast,
The spirits of enjoyment pass'd
She sees, she hears ; ah !—then her eyes o'erflow,
Not with a mother's love, but with a widow's woe.

* * * * *

About five years after the death of Harding, Emma died also. The little ills that chequer life had so worked upon her acute feelings, that her's was indeed a widowhood in woe. A fit of paralysis seized her whilst in the bosom of her family : she lingered for

a few days, and on the nineteenth of her suffering, died at the vigorous age of 45. There was the same little tragic ceremony at Merstone, as at the burial of Harding, for they sleep in the same grave, and a single stone bears their names and ages, leaving their merits to the world, and as a more valuable legacy than fortune could have enabled them to bequeath to their children. Many of the village throng at Emma's funeral remembered her in the hey-day of her youth; some were perhaps her playmates; and they too recollected her departure from Merstone. In the interval she became a fond wife, a mother of unbounded affection; but alas! an inconsolable widow! How deeply is the picture shadowed with grief; but let us recollect the sublime sentiment of Sterne, that

God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb;

and then we shall cease to repine.

Towards evening I drew near to the

newly-turned grave of Harding and Emma. It was in April, and the chilling wind began to threaten the few tender leaflets with which spring had already bedecked the trees. Here, said I, lie an honest pair. I may say, a *few* years since they started in life ; and during that period they have been blessed with children, five of whom survive them. By industry and integrity they have educated and fitted them as ornaments of society ; and thus, have they not fulfilled their part ? Though not conspicuous in life, they are still to be numbered among the “ *honourables of the land.*” By common sense and a right application of what abilities they possessed, they were enabled to ward off difficulties ; and rather than waste life in repining at its cares, they overcame them by their own perseverance.

In England we know how to appreciate the sterling worth of *middle life*, inasmuch as its members are among the best germs of her prosperity ; and however well the historian and biographer may conceive them-

selves to be employed in perpetuating the successes of empires, the conquests of ambition, the foundation of illustrious houses, or the virtues of public lives—it must be acknowledged that all human excellence may be traced to the influence of such principles as those which governed Harding and Emma throughout their short career.

Debtor and Creditor.

“ The time is out of joint.”—*Hamlet*.

“ A man of my profession never counterfeits, till he lays hold upon a debtor, and says he *rests* him ; for then he brings him to all manner of unrest.”—*The Bailiff*, in “ *Every Man in his Humour*.”

“ Run not into debt, either for wares sold, or money borrowed ; be content to want things that are not of absolute necessity, rather than to run up the score ; such a man pays at the latter a third part more than the principal comes to, and is in perpetual servitude to his creditors ; lives uncomfortably ; is necessitated to increase his debts to stop his creditors’ mouths ; and many times falls into desperate courses.”—*Sir M. Hale*.

“ THE greatest of all distinctions in civil life,” says Steele, “ is that of Debtor and Creditor ;” although no kind of slavery is so easily endured, as that of being in debt. Luxury and expensive habits, which are commonly thought to enlarge our liberty,

by increasing our enjoyments, are thus the means of its infringement; whilst, in nine out of ten cases, the lessons taught by this rigid experience lead to the bending and breaking of our spirits, and the unfitting of us for the rational pleasures of life. All ranks of mankind seem to fall into this fatal error, from the voluptuous Cleopatra to the needy philosopher, who doles out a meal's-worth of morality for his fellow creatures, and who would feign live according to his own precepts, had he not exhausted his pocket in the acquisition of his experience.

I blush to confess that I have often thought the *habit of debt* to be our national inheritance, from that bug-bear of out-of-place men, the Sinking Fund, to the parish clerk who mortgages his fees at the chandler's; and that my countrymen seem to have resolved to increase their own enjoyments at the expense of posterity, with whose provision, even Swift thinks we have no concern. Again, I have thought that we are apt to overrate our national ad-

vancement, by supposing the present race to be wiser than the previous one, without once looking into our individual contributions to this state of enlightenment. Proud as we are of this distinction in the social scale, we can record but few instances of contemporary genius ; and we are bound to confess that men are not a whit the better in the present than in the previous generation. Thus we hoodwink each other, till social outrages become every-day occurrences, and every thing but sheer violence is protected by its frequency ; and in this manner, we consent to compromise our happiness, and then affect to be astonished at its rarity. In the later ages of the world, men have learned to temporise with principle, and to sacrifice at the shrine of passing interest, as much real virtue as would bear them harmless throughout life. Hence, of what more avail are the virtues of the Roman fathers, or the amiable friendship of Scipio and Lelius, than as so many amusing fictions to exercise the imaginations of schoolmen

in drawing outlines of character, which experience does not finish. Friends, like certain flowers, bloom around us in the sunshine of success; but at nightfall, or at the approach of storms, they shut up their hearts; and thus, poor victims being rifled of their mind's content, with their little string of enjoyments broken up for ever, are abandoned to the pity or scorn of bystanders. It is impossible to reflect for a moment on such a crisis, without dropping a tear for the self-created infirmities of man: but these are considerations at which he shudders, and which he would rather varnish over with the sophistry of his refinement, and self-conceit.

I fear that I am breaking my rule by not confining myself to a few shades of debt and conscience, with a view of determining how far they are usually reconciled among us. The task may not prove altogether fruitless; notwithstanding, to find honest men would require the lantern of Diogenes, and the search, perhaps, turn out in the proportion of Gratiano's eloquence.

In our youthful days, we all remember to have read a pithy string of maxims, by Dr. Franklin; and we are accustomed to admire the pertinence of their wit—but here their influence too often terminates. Since Franklin's time, the practice of getting into debt has become more and more easy, notwithstanding men have become more wary. Goldsmith, too, gives us a true picture of this practice, in his scene with Mr. Padusoy, the mercer, a mode which has been found to succeed so well since his time, that, with the exception of a few short-cuts by sharpers and other proscribed gentry, little amendment has been made. Profuseness on the part of the debtor will generally be found to beget confidence on that of the creditor; and, in like manner, diffidence will create mistrust, and mistrust an entire overthrow of the scheme. An unblushing front, and the gift of *nonchalance*, are, therefore, the best qualifications for a debtor to obtain credit, whilst poor modesty will be starved in her own littleness. In vain has Juvenal

protested, "*Fronti nulla fides*;" and have the world been amused with anecdotes of paupers dying with money sewed up in their clothes: appearance and assumed habits are still the handmaids to confidence; and so long as this system exists, the warfare of Debtor and Creditor will be continued. Procrastination will be found to be another furtherance of the system, inasmuch as it is too evident throughout life, that men are more apt to take pleasure "by the forelock," than to calculate its consequence. In this manner, men of irregular habits anticipate and forestal every hour of their lives, and pleasure and pain continue to alternate, till pain, like debt, accumulates, and sinks its patient below the level of the world. Economy and forecast do not enter into the composition of such men, nor are such lessons often felt or acknowledged, till custom has rendered the heart unfit for the reception of their counsels. It is too frequently that the neglect of these principles strikes at the root of social happiness,

and produces those lamentable wrecks of men—those shadows of sovereignty—which people our prisons, poor-houses, and asylums. Genius, with all her book-knowledge, is not exempt from this failing; but, on the contrary, a sort of fatality seems to attend her sons and daughters, which tarnishes their fame, and often exposes them to the brutish attacks of the ignorant and vulgar. Wits, and even philosophers, are among this number; and we are bound to acknowledge that, beyond the raciness of their writings, there is but little to admire in the lives of such men as Steele, Foote, or Sheridan. It is, however, fit that principle should be thus recognised and upheld, and that any dereliction from its rules should be placed against the account of such as enjoy other degrees of superiority, and allowed to form an item in the scale of their merits.

Debt is obligation, and “obligation,” says Hobbes, “is thralldom.” This will be evident if we once consider to what a variety of mean shifts the state of being in

debt exposes us. It sits like fetters of iron on conscience, but as old offenders often whistle to the clanking of their chains, so rogues lighten their hearts by increasing their debts. It destroys freedom, inasmuch as a debtor is his creditor's slave; and, under certain circumstances, his range may be reduced to a few square feet, and his view prescribed by a few cubits of brick walls; and, humiliating as this may appear, it sits lightly on the majority, since even the brawlers for liberty, forgetting "the air they breathe," are often to be found within their pale; but in this case, *they* forget, that being in legal debt is less venial than many other sins, since debt cannot be cleared by any appeals to argument, or settled by shades of opinion. Subterfuge, lying, and loss of liberty, are not all the miseries of a conscious debtor: in the world he resembles a prisoner at large; he walks many circuitous miles to avoid being dunned, and would sooner meet a mad dog than an angry creditor. He lives in a sort of *abeyance*,

and sinks under shame when caught enjoying an undue luxury. In short, he is cramped in all his enjoyments, and considers his fellow, out of debt, as great as the Emperor of the Celestial Empire, after whose repast other kings may dine. Hence ensue repining and envy: he fancies himself slighted by the world, and in return, he cares not for the opinion of the world; his energies waste, and he falls!

These sufferings, however, appertain but to one class of debtors. There are others who scorn such compunctious visitations, and set the qualms of conscience at defiance. They press into their service all the aids of cunning, and travel on the bye-roads of the world till they are bronzed enough for its highway. Their memories are like mirrors, and their debts like breathings on them, which vanish in the same moment they are produced. They look on mankind as a large family, and the world as a large store-house, or open house, where they have a claim proportioned to their wants. They

clear their consciences by maintaining, that what is parted with is not lost, and foster their hopes with the idea of its reversion. They think those who *can* ride ought not to walk, and, therefore, that all men have the option of such chances of good fortune. With this laxity of principle, they quarter themselves on the credulity of extortionate tradesmen, and the good-natured simplicity of friends or associates. If, perchance, they possess any excellence above their society, they consider it as a redeeming grace for their importunities, and calculating on the vulgarity, *ad captandum*, and that what is dearest bought is most prized, they make their friends pay freely for their admiration. Nor are such admirers willing to break the spell by which they are bound ; since, by their unqualified approval, they sanction, and even flatter *the man* of their party to their mutual ruin ; for, as Sel-den observes, “ he who will keep a monkey, should surely pay for the glasses he breaks.”

Prone as men are to the crooked path,

and still more apt as the weak and ignorant are to indulge them in such a course, perhaps, the love of principle is as strong in men's hearts as ever it will be. Of times gone by, we must not here speak, because the *amor patriæ* has long since shifted to *amor nummi*, and naked honesty has learned the decency of dress. There have been profligates in all ages; but the world, though sometimes a severe master, ruins as many by its deceitful indulgence, as by its ill-timed severity. Good fellows are usually the worst treated by the world allowing them to go beyond their tether, and then cutting them off out of harm's way. Nothing but an earlier discipline can preserve them; for so habitual is debt, that the boy who forestals his pocket money, uses it as a step-ladder to the mortgage of his estate. The sufferers in such cases are generally shut up in prisons or poor-houses, to afflict or console each other, as their sensibilities may direct; and thus the salutary lessons which their condition might afford, is lost to the world.

Neither are such scenes of real misery courted by mankind, the nearest semblances which they can bear, being in the sentimentalities of the stage, encumbered as they often are by overstrained fiction and caricature. On the contrary, a walk through these receptacles of human woe, and the little histories of their inmates, will often furnish as many lessons of morality and world-knowledge as will suffice us for life. How often may we see the rapacious creditor at the same goal with the penniless debtor, whom he has hunted through life ; supplicating mercy which he never exercised, and vainly attempting to recant a course of cruelty and persecution, by mixing up his merited sufferings with the distresses of his abused companion.

Goldsmith has said, that “ every man is the architect of his own fortune ;” and perhaps there are few men who, in the moments of their deepest suffering, have not felt the application of this maxim. In high life, embarrassments are generally attributable to the

to the love of gambling, prodigality or some such sweeping vice, which no station can controul. Bankruptcies, or failures in trade, being common occurrences, are seldom traced to their origin, which would be often found in expensive habits, and overreaching or misguided speculations, and sometimes in the treachery and villainy of partners; and amidst this bad system, so nicely is credit balanced, that a run of ill-luck, or a mere idle whisper, has been known to destroy commercial character of a century's growth. But in these cases it should be recollected that the reputation of the parties has probably been endangered by some great stretch of enterprize, calculated to excite envy or suspicion.

Debts of fashion, or those contracted in high life, are usually the most unjust, probably the result of honesty being more a virtue of necessity than of choice, or of the disgraceful practice of imposing on the extravagant and wealthy. Experience, it is granted, is a treasure which fools must pur-

chase at a high price ; but however largely we may hold possession of the commodity, it will not excuse that scheme of bare-weight honesty which some are apt to make the standard of their dealings with the rich. A man of family, by indiscretion, becomes embarrassed : the clamours of his creditors soon magnify his luxuries, but not a word is said about their innumerable extortions, in the shape of commissions, per-centages, and other licensed modifications of cheatery ; nor are they reckoned to the advantage of the debtor. These may be practices of world-wisdom and money-getting, but they are not rules of conscience. In truth, there is not a more painful scene than the ruin of a young man of family. There is so much vice and unprincipled waste opposed to indignant and rapacious clamour, often accompanied with idle jests. Here again is food for the vitiated appetites of scandalmongers, and that miserable but numerous portion of mankind who rejoice at the fall of a superior. The name of

debtor is an odium which a proud spirit can but ill support ; cunning and avarice come in a thousand shapes, not to retrieve lost credit, but to swell the list of embarrassment—friends have fled at the approach of the crisis, and associates appear but to pluck the poor victim of the wrecks of fortune ! * * * *

“ Friends found in sunshine, to be lost in storm.”

Absenteeism, the curse of England, is the only alternative of wretched and humiliating imprisonment. An entire change of habits ensues : ease and elegance of manners dwindle into coldness and neglect ; liberality to meanness ; and good-natured simplicity to chicanery and cunning : in society, too, how changed ; once, the gay table-companion, full of gallantry and wit—now solitary and dejected, with the weeds of discomfort and despair rankling around his heart. If fortune ever enable him to regenerate from such obscurity, perhaps custom may have habituated him to privation, till the return of comfort serves little

more than to awaken recollections of past error or obligation, and to embitter future enjoyment. Such a change may, however, empower him to adjust his conscience with men, of all satisfaction the most valuable, notwithstanding that the world are readier to exaggerate misgivings than to recognize sterling principle. It is alike obvious, that men who are under the stigma of debt, do not enjoy that ease which they are commonly thought to possess. The horrors of dependence, in all its afflicting shapes, are known to visit them hourly, although, in some instances, buoyancy of spirits and affected gaiety may enable them to appear happy ; and oftentimes would they be awakened to a sense of these fallacies, and thus become reformed, were it not for the rigour of persecution, which renders them reckless of all that may ensue, and callous to the honourable distinctions of man. This, of a truth, is tampering with human weakness, and is too often known to prove the upshot of industry, by sacrificing principle to vindictive passion.

That a system of Debt is identified with the existence and framework of all commercial republics is well known ; else genius would cease to be fostered, enterprize would be cramped, and industry wither on her own soil. Nevertheless, this scheme may be so extended, as to beget indifference for the future, and neglect of present concerns, which leads to gradual ruin. Time travels at divers paces, but with none more quickly than the unprepared debtor ; and he who allows his debts to get the start of his fortune, lives upon other men's estate, and must accordingly become the slave of their passions and prejudices : in truth, he may be thus said to be parting with his independence by piecemeal. Hence, he becomes a kind of *convict* in society, his debts resembling a log of wood chained to his body, and a brand-mark on his conscience. Thus, pent up with fear and disquietude, his imprisonment is two-fold, and being an enemy to his own peace, he is apt to imagine all men to be leagued against him. If his debts

are those of youth, his old age will probably resemble the sequel to revelry, when appetite has fled to make way for disgust and spleen ; and he dies—in debt. Mark the lamentable scenes that follow :—when the pride of inheritance sinks before the unsparing hand of the usurer or exorbitant mortgagee.

In the preceding epigraphs, somewhat hastily strung together, no attempt has been made to remedy the evil system of Debtor and Creditor : it must, indeed, work its own cure. Human life is but one continued scene of anticipation, from the beginning to the end ; and anticipation is but another term for Debt. Money* is only an artificial standard in society ; and so numerous are the inconsistencies of mankind, that were there no money, there would be similar evils of Debt. A loan is still the same,

* Sir Thomas More, in his delightful "*Utopia*," says, " Men's fears, sollicitudes, cares, labours, and watchings, would all perish in the same moment, with the value of money : even poverty itself, for the relief of which money seems most necessary, would fall."

whether it be a guinea or a loaf; and whatever may be the character of the creditor. The exclusive application of Debtor and Creditor, to what is termed *commerce*, is altogether a vulgar error. It has other relations in society, which may be less substantial, but are in effect more important. No man is so poor as to be utterly destitute, and have “nothing to give,” even if he be without coin in his pocket. An obligation in any shape, unless repaid, makes the receiver a debtor. Time is money; and to receive an office of friendship, without the *intention* of repaying it, is, morally, as culpable as to borrow a shilling with a determination of keeping it. A girl has a fortune of five thousand pounds and is beloved by a young fellow without a hundred: both are equally attached, and were it not for the fortune, they might be married. Sometimes money is thrown in as a sort of make-weight, and the bargain is struck; but it often happens that the fortune being the only tangible substance, is suffered to

outweigh every other claim, which is considered merely of nominal value.

There is no *secret* in getting money ; as well might we believe in alchemy : neither is there any science in being agreeable : what has pleased will please again, and (with modifications of time and circumstance) what has turned out profitable will yield a similar result. The grand art is to use money, or, as in the game of life, “ to play for much and stake little.” But we usually do the reverse : thus, a man gives £50,000 for an estate, without ever considering what capabilities he possesses for enjoying his wealth ; for, as lord Bacon says, “ there be that can pack the cards and cannot play well.” An abused fortune is a disgrace to its possessor ; else what makes wealthy vice so low in public estimation : for bad as the world may be, they have the justice to make this distinction ; although misanthropes will tell you, it is rather from envy of their wealth than a proper perception of their merits.

It would be almost supererogatory to say any thing about the cubits which money adds to a man's stature ; for until a set of philanthropists can contrive to shame the purse-proud out of their vanity, by treating them according to their virtues, and not according to their fortune,—the petty tyranny of wealth will endure. The only method of curing the Dagonites, or worshippers of gold, is to leave them to their own folly, till they become choked with its excess. The lives of rich and poor are of the same term, and their chances of happiness better proportioned than we imagine them to be. This made the poet happier over his Splendid Shilling than the nabob with his millions ; it is a sort of store, *per se*, which cannot be described, but by too frequent drafts can easily be exhausted. If, as Swift says, the great secret of life be *hoaxing*, or as a more reckless spirit thinks—intoxication—then a truce to lip-wisdom.

Charles Dibdin, one of the finest lyrical poets of our age, supplies me with an ap-

propriate quip for the conclusion of these saws of world-knowledge. It is from a ballad entitled “ Life’s Weather-gage,” stated to be the last written by that celebrated master-spirit of British song :

But take the good and evil cheerly
And sum up *creditor and debtor* ;
If in this world they use you queerly,
Be honest, and you’ll find a better.

A Day at St. Cloud.

I walked up gravely to the window in my dusty black coat, and looking through the glass, saw all the world in yellow, blue, and green, running at the ring of pleasure.—*Sterne*.

ST. CLOUD is the Richmond of France ; or rather, it is to Paris what Richmond, in the days of its regal splendour, was to London—the summer palace of the court. In this comparison, allowance must be made for the opposite building taste of each nation ; especially as Richmond has an appearance of substantial comfort in its massive brick mansions and rusticated cottage groupes. The French *Sheen* is, on the contrary, gayer ; the exterior of the

residences being whitened, or, what is still more artificial, coloured and decorated in tawdry French. Such, at least, is the character of the *auberges*, or inns, and *restaurateurs*, with which St. Cloud is even better supplied than our Richmond. In situation, however, they strongly assimilate; the former being placed on an acclivity overlooking the Seine, as the latter is on the banks of the Thames.

In Paris, a man may indeed “play tricks with his fortune,” even to a greater extent than he can in the English capital: *par example*, in the French metropolis, his standing in society is not measured by the height of his residence. There is accordingly less restraint in the public amusements; for, as Sterne says, “this is a nicety which makes not the heart sore at Paris.” But *le Dimanche* is the gala-day of certain orders of Parisian society. It is set apart for fêtes and fairs, balls and fresco entertainments; and the nobility and gentry absent themselves from the theatres on that

evening, though with a more liberal motive than that which induced the opera subscribers in England to give up their theatre for one night during the season. Domestic enjoyment seems to be a secondary feature in the French character ; which has induced some conceited tourists to imagine comfort indigenous with England. The English are like certain animals which sleep half the year, and their amusements are, therefore, overloaded with dulness, so as frequently to partake of the gravity and reserve of study—or at best, like the game of chess ; whereas, the Parisian is happiest when he is out of doors : he rises early, breakfasts and reads the newspapers with his windows open, or beneath the viranda of a café, and this, too, from April to October ; he dines nearly after the same fashion, and usually retires early. He is any thing rather than a stay-at-home ; but he doubtless has his social enjoyments as well as the Englishman ; for, in what country of the globe are women better treated than

in France—*la belle France* ; a distinction which I have seen humourously illustrated in a print of two labourers parting at the corner of a street, with the words, “ *Mes respects à Madame.*”

St. Cloud, as I have already said, is the usual summer residence of the French court ; and with a royal liberality which might be less politic elsewhere, the park is granted for three fairs—September 7 and the two following Sundays, on the last of which I resolved to visit the fête of St. Cloud. It was a glowing September day. The sun shone with more than mellow warmth through the groves of the Tuileries, and on the little southern terrace, was unusually crowded with groupes of rosy children, with here and there a valetudinarian, who seemed to have emerged from his chamber, to enjoy the parting glories of the season. Crowds of elegantly-dressed company were promenading the mall, or principal walk, and some few were not incuriously lingering about the enclosed parterres

of the garden, whose beauties would soon be transported to a milder atmosphere. There was a general stir in the neighbouring streets ; it did not resemble the bustle of business, but had more of the gaiety of a holiday scene. The *Pont Royal* was thronged with passengers, and just beneath it, were several hundreds, many of whom were embarking in the steam-boat for St. Cloud. But the Seine is at all times less inviting for such an excursion than our Thames ; and in the summer months many insulated spots may be seen in the centre of the latter river. At the next bridge (Louis XVI.) there was a general muster of carriages, each adapted for six or eight passengers, and drawn by one or two horses. Here was a loud clamour of “ St. Cloud ” and “ Versailles ” among the drivers, some of whom were even more officious than the Jehus of Greenwich, or the wights of Charing Cross or Piccadilly. I resisted all their importunities, and passed on through the *Champs Elysées*, or a dusty road through a grove,

intersected with ill-formed paths, with a few gaudy cafés bearing pompous inscriptions—for Voltaire has made the French too fond of nomenclature, to say with our Shakspeare, “ what’s in a name !” The road presented a strange specimen of the insubordination of French driving, notwithstanding police superintendants affected much concern in the matter. Diligences, fiacres, and carriages resembling large covered cabriolets, might be seen loaded with gaily-dressed women and children, with a due proportion of young Parisians, all just in the hey-day of mirth, drawn by dust-provoking Flanders horses, their drivers slashing almost indiscriminately, and, with their clamour and confusion, far exceeding the Epsom road on a race-day.

At length, escaping from the dust and din of the French elysium, I halted to enjoy the distant view of the city of Paris, from the gate of the barrier. It was indeed an interesting scene. Through the avenue, whose area presented a living stream of traf-

fic, might be seen the terraces and groves of the Tuilleries, and the spacious and irregular palace, with its cupola tops; the tarnished dome of the Invalides; the cupola of St. Genevieve; the grey towers of Notre Dame; then the winding Seine, with its bridges, quays, and terraces, flanked with the long line of the Tuilleries, and the Luxembourg, and Louvre galleries, on the one side; and on the other by the noble façade of the Chamber of Deputies; the courtly mansions of St. Germain; and the blackened front and dome of the Institute. What a multitude of associations flitted across the memory, by a single glance at—PARIS—the capital of that gay, light-hearted, and Mercurial people,—the French nation—the focus of European luxury, and the grand political arena of modern history, the very calendar of whose events, within the last half century, will form one of the most interesting episodes that ever glowed among the records of human character. In the chain might be traced the vain-glory of

conquest linked with defeated ambition, and the sullied splendour of royalty just breaking through the clouds of discontent, and slowly dispelling the mists of disaffection and political prejudice. What an unenviable contrast to the man who has “no enemy but wind and rough weather.” The same objects that prompted these discordant reflexions gave rise to others of the most opposite character; and within the walls, where treaties, abdications, and warrants, by turns settled and resettled, exiled and condemned—were the store-houses of art, with all her proud and peaceful labours of sculpture, painting, and architecture, through galleries and saloons, on whose contents the chisel and the pencil had lingered many a life, and reduced the compass of its fond designs to the cubits of a statue, the fame of a picture, or the glory of a pillar or ceiling—such are the frail elements of human art. Then, the very road along which these holiday crowds were journeying; how different must have been its aspect a few years

since ; what scenes of breathless haste, retreat, horror, and dismay, when the darling fabric of popularity began to totter beneath its insecurity, and fate urged on thousands in the ruin which their own impetuosity had begun. But the contrast became too painful to pursue, and I left the subject for the historians, resolving not to be as Dryden thinks *they* are, lighted up like tapers, to waste themselves for the benefit of others.

Perhaps my reader may imagine that I have passed through the *Elysian fields* at rather too rapid a pace ; but, in France, names should be even more cautiously trusted than in England ; for here is nothing like the *locos lætos*, or the *sedes beatas* of Virgil's paradise, if we except a few painted cafés and villas, which some Englishmen would liken to card-houses, or the mimic dwellings to be traced on their imitative china. But Virgil drew his picture amidst the finest charms of Italian scenery,

where nature had supplied what the invention of man will never enable him to imitate. Almost every thing about Paris is cold and artificially gay: it is true, the avenue through which I had just passed, was noble and not destitute of the high over-arching beauty of Milton's mosaic groves; but, in French scenery, (and in no part more than in the vicinity of Paris) this avenue taste is too prevalent. In short, all the trees seem to have been planted in rank and file, and most of the gardens laid out in circle and segment order. Poplars perk their heads in rows at every mile, and you see but few old forest timber trees, with mossy trunks and mighty arms. Next, the soil is only interesting to geologists, for the millions of marine and fresh-water shells and animal remains which it contains, especially in the plaster quarries, from which Cuvier and his associates infer, that it has been alternately covered with salt and fresh water, and is connected with "the last

revolutions which formed the present continents.”* The *Bois de Bologne* is yet in its infancy, being a knot of rides through mere twigs ; their arrangement is very judicious, but in general effect, our Regent’s Park is superior.

The road now began to exhibit the usual appearance of an approach to a country fête or fair. Scores of pedestrians, overcome with the heat and dust of the day, might be seen at the little boxes or shops of the *traiteurs*, or cooks, and at the houses of the *marchands de vin et de la biere* ; these by their anticipated anxiety caused the line from Paris to St. Cloud to resemble a road-side fair. Cheerfulness and vivacity were uppermost in the passengers ; and the elastic pace of dozens of gaily-dressed *soubrettes* not a little enhanced the interest of the scene. Neither were these charms impaired by that species of vulgarity which not unfrequently characterizes the

* See Cuvier’s Theory of the Earth, &c.

road to suburban fairs ; and, what is still more creditable to humanity, there was no brutality towards jaded horses or hacks sinking beneath their loads.

Historians attach some antiquarian importance to the village of St. Cloud, it being historically confounded with the earliest times of the French monarchy ; for, from the beginning of the first race, the kings of France had a country-seat here. This spot was originally called Novigentium ;—Clodoalde, or Cloud, the youngest of the three sons of Clodomir, having escaped from the savage fury of his unnatural uncle, Clotaire, and thus avoided sharing the tragical fate of his two brothers, concealed himself in a wood near this spot, and there led the life of a hermit ; at his decease, bequeathing his hermitage, and a church besides, built near it, to the chapter of the church of Paris. After his death (as a return for his liberality) he was canonized, and the village from him took the name of Sanctus Clodoaldus, or St. Cloud. It was

at this palace that Henry III. was assassinated by Jaques Clement, in 1589; here likewise took place the revolution of Nov. 10, 1799, which placed Buonaparte at the head of the government.*

* The period here alluded to is, perhaps, one of the most important epochs of the French revolution. Napoleon's splendid success at Aboukir enabled him to dazzle and mislead the French people; and so intoxicated were they with the glitter of this victory, that, in their enthusiasm, neither party ventured to question his purpose, or the authority by which he had left his army in Egypt. He however contrived to appear indifferent to popular honours—secluded himself in study, and was more frequently to be found in the chambers of the Institute, than in the haunts of political life. "In all this," says his biographer, "there was deep policy. No one knew better how much popular applause depends on the gloss of novelty, and how great is the difference in public estimation, betwixt him who appears to hunt and court acclamations, and the wiser and more disguised favourite of the multitude, whose popularity follows after him, and seeks him out, instead of being the object of his pursuit and ambition." Such as are familiar with the biographical details of Napoleon, will not fail to remember St Cloud, as the place of meeting of the two councils—the Five Hundred, and the Ancients, or Moderés. The Orangerie was assigned to the Council of Five Hundred, and the Gallery of Mars to that of the Ancients. Who can forget Napoleon's subtle harangue on the termination of the sharp debate, challenging the legality of the transference of the Legislative bodies from Paris to St. Cloud? "Citizens," said he, "you are placed upon a volcano. Let me tell you the truth with the

I now reached the bridge of St. Cloud, an elegant modern structure which crosses

frankness of a soldier. Citizens,—I was remaining tranquil with my family, when the commands of the Council of Ancients called me to arms. I collected my brave military companions, and brought forward the arm of the country in obedience to you who are the head. We are rewarded with calumny—they compare me to Cromwell—to Cæsar. Had I desired to usurp the supreme authority, I have had opportunities to do so before now. But I swear to you, the country has not a more disinterested patriot. We are surrounded by danger and by civil war. Let us not hazard the loss of those advantages for which we have made such sacrifices—Liberty and equality.” He then went on to denounce the Council of Five Hundred, as containing men who desired to bring back the Convention, with its revolutionary committees, its scaffolds, its popular insurrections. “But I,” said he, “will save you from such horrors—I and my brave comrades at arms, whose swords and caps I see at the door of the hall.” This appeal, powerful as it was, was answered by cries of “the Constitution,” &c.—the voice of the Moderates was overwhelmed by clamour—and never had the party of democracy shown itself fiercer, or more tenacious, than when about to receive the death-blow. Napoleon’s next expedient was to enter the Orangerie, attended by four grenadiers. He was received with murmurs; all the deputies arose, some rushed on Buonaparte, and seized him by the collar; others called out—“Outlawry—outlawry—let him be proclaimed a traitor.” At this crisis of the fracas, a party of grenadiers rushed into the hall with drawn swords, and extricating Napoleon from the deputies, bore him off in their arms, breathless with the scuffle. At length, Murat, deputed by Buonaparte to execute the commands of his brother Lucien, entered the Orangerie with drums beating,

the Seine, near the entrance to the village.* Here the river loses much of its importance; and in summer, the steam-boats are not unfrequently delayed in their *voyage* (if it may be so designated) for lack of water. The prospect of the château, or palace, embosomed in trees, and the park variegated with natural and artificial beauties, with the adjoining village on a steep shelving hill—is unusually picturesque. On

at the head of a detachment with fixed bayonets. He summoned the deputies to disperse on their peril; some of whom and the spectators began to leave the hall; but the greater part continued firm. “Forward, grenadiers,” said the officer who commanded the party: they levelled their muskets, and advanced as if to the charge. The deputies now fled on all sides, most of them jumping from the windows of the Orangerie, and leaving behind them their official caps, scarfs, and gowns. In a very few minutes, the apartments were entirely clear; and, “thus,” says the biographer already quoted, “furnishing, at its conclusion, a striking parallel to the scene which ended the long parliament of Charles the First’s time, terminated the last democratical assembly of France.

* On July 1, 1815, a sharp encounter took place on this bridge, between the English and Prussians (who had made themselves masters of the village), and the French troops, who had retired from thence to that of Boulogne, having previously broken the central arch, to prevent the passage of the allies.

the present occasion, however, the principal attraction was the fête, which reminded me more forcibly of John Bunyan's Vanity Fair, than any other exhibition I had ever witnessed. The entrance to this motley scene was by the principal gate, where the carriages set down their company, and at a short distance along the bank of the river, the steam-boat in like manner contributed its visitors. On entering the park, I was first struck with a long row of boxes, (somewhat in the style of those at Vauxhall) but on a raised bank, and attached to a *restaurant*. Here were tables for dinner, and as many others were laid in the open air—with the usual *carte* of 2 or 300 articles, and the economical elegancies of silver, napkins, and china, and this, too, in style little inferior to Verey's in the Palais Royal. Promenaders of the better description appeared in the mall, or principal walk, and it being the last fête of the season, their attendance was very numerous. The stalls and exhibitions were chiefly on

the left side of this walk ; at the former was displayed an almost indescribable variety of wares, which were the adjudged prizes in a lottery ; but, from the decisions which I witnessed, they resembled the *stationary* capitals in an English scheme—the nominal stock in trade of the office-keepers. Many of these little gambling shops were superintended by women, who proved themselves far from deficient in loquacious inducements for adventurers ; and by their dexterous settlement of the chances, left little time for losers to reflect on their folly. Provisions of various descriptions were to be purchased at every turn, and among their *marchands*, it was not incurious to see some humble professors of gastronomy over smoking viands, fritters, and goffers or indented wafers baked on cast-iron stoves *à la minute*—it must be owned unseasonable luxuries for a September day. The *spectacles*, or shows, in noise and absurdity, exceeded the English trumpery of that order ; and to judge from the gaping crowds

which they attracted, *we* are not the only credulous nation in the world. Among the games was a machine resembling an English round-a-bout, with wooden horses for the players, each of whom was furnished with a foil, with which he strove to seize the greatest number of rings from the centre: this was, indeed, a chivalrous exhibition. Stilt-walkers, mountebank families, and jugglers, “chequered in bulk and brains,” lent their aid to amuse the crowd; and, occasionally, two or three fellows contrived to enact scenes from plays, and with their vulgar wit to merit the applause of their audience. Portable clock-work exhibitions swarmed, and mummeries or mysteries representing the Life and Death of our Saviour, and the blessed Virgin, appeared to be ritual accompaniments of the day, and represented each stage of the holy lives. The bearers of the latter machinery enlivened their exhibitions with a grinding organ, which they accompanied with appropriate ditties or carols. Crosses and

other emblems of catholicism were hung about the theatrical boxes or shows, which, with their representations, could only be compared with the nursery toys of Noah's ark, with which most of us have been amused.* Accordingly, here were models of Nazareth, Jerusalem, and Mount Calvary, in the characteristic accuracy of biblical topography, and from the zeal of the spectators, the ingenuity of the inventors was unsparingly rewarded.

Toleration, liberal as it might have been, did not prevent my sickening at such sights, and I turned from them to the natural beauties of the park, which, aided by the happy inequalities of the ground, (which French artists imagined would be such an obstacle to its perfection) possesses far more variety than is usually found in the pleasure grounds of France. The original plantation of the

* If the supposition be not too puerile and nugatory for the antiquarian,—is it not probable that these toys of Noah's ark are the relics of exhibitions similar to the above, in England: they are certainly the oldest of our nursery toys.

park was the work of La Nôtre, who, it will be recollected, planned the garden of Versailles ; but St. Cloud is considered his *chef-d'œuvre*, and proves, that with the few natural advantages which it afforded him, he was enabled to effect more here than millions have accomplished at Versailles—where art is fairly overmatched with her own wasteful and ridiculous excess. This alone ought to make the French blush for that monument of royal folly.

The present palace of St. Cloud was built in 1572, by an individual called Jerome de Gondy ; it was afterwards purchased in succession by four bishops of Paris. Louis XIV. purchased it in 1658, and presented it to his brother, the duke of Orleans, by whom it was considerably altered and embellished. It remained in the Orleans family till 1782, when it became the property of Maria Antoinette, who became much attached to the spot, and likewise made considerable improvements there. Under the imperial government of Napo-

leon, large sums were also expended on St. Cloud, destined to become the scene of some of the stirring events of his career.

The architects of these several periods succeeded in forming the parts which they found constructed, into a whole sufficiently harmonious and symmetrical. The exterior façade forms three sides of a large square, and though not perfectly regular, is agreeable. The entrance is by a vestibule, within which I saw guards on duty—an unsightly contrast with the cottage style of some part of the palace. The staircase and hall are, however, suited to the magnificence of a royal residence. The private apartments are said to be furnished in a style of chaste and elegant simplicity, with hangings of rich Lyons silks ; but the state rooms are more sumptuous in their decorations. The saloons and galleries have ceilings painted in fresco, by the celebrated Mignard. Vases of porcelain, from Sèvres in the neighbourhood, Florentine tables,

and the usual assortment of palace finery, complete the decorations of the rooms.

The situation of the château is, however, its greatest attraction. It possesses a fine view of Paris, which is indeed a splendid item in the prospect of the princely occupants; and the sight of the capital may, perhaps, be a pleasant relief to the natural seclusion of the palace. But royalty is too much hemmed in with satellites and slaves to allow the silent reveries and rebukes of solitude to interfere; and the “men in great place”—the “thrice servants,”—are too well versed in court policy to trust a crowned head entirely to think for itself. Modern times have, nevertheless, furnished one brilliant exception to this slavish rule; but the result has proved, that a single mind in a state, like a single plank at sea, will not always secure the adventurer from ruin or wreck. Napoleon passed much of what the world thought his “leisure” at St. Cloud: it was to him a favourite scene of repose, when

compared with the noisy site of the Tuileries ; and Versailles was too wantonly splendid for a republican abode, notwithstanding the emperor took some pains in re-gilding a few of the rooms. It had been, too, the scene of outrage and massacre, and perchance the unwelcome whispers of conscience might occasionally have stolen through its gilded saloons and galleries to disconcert the embryo schemes of further enterprise. Again, St. Cloud was one of the pinnacles of Napoleon's sudden glory, in 1799 ; it was associated with success ; and as

Fearless minds climb soonest unto crowns,

so ambitious men avoid the scenes of their defeat, though they at last fall with dizziness from their elevated stations. Napoleon, when at St Cloud, is said to have been jealous of intruders into his park, and approach to the palace was interrupted,—so ominous were his ideas of his own safety.

One of the most remarkable objects in the park is a kind of square tower, sur-

mounted with an exact copy, in *terra cotta*, of the lantern of Diogenes at Athens, ornamented with six Corinthian columns. It is used as an observatory, and, like its original, is associated with the name of the illustrious Grecian—it being also called the lantern of Diogenes. Its view of the subjacent plain overlooks the city of Paris by a distance of twenty miles.

The fountains and *jets d'eau* are entitled to special notice, although in extent and variety they are far exceeded by those of Versailles. The arrangement of the principal cascade is well contrived, and I had the good fortune to be present at the moment the water commenced flowing, which continued but a short time: this struck me as a singular piece of mimicry, and compared with those truly-sublime spectacles—the cascades of Nature,—the boasted works of St. Cloud seemed mere playthings, like the little falls which children contrive in running brooks; or at best resembling hydraulic exhibitions on an extensive scale.

The playing commenced by a jet bursting from a point almost secluded by trees, which appeared on a level with the first story of the palace; the stream then fell into stone basins, and by turns threw itself aloft, or gushed from the mouths of numberless marine animals, and descended by glassy falls into a basin, whence it found its way into several vase-shaped forms, and again descended by magnificent cascades, discharging themselves into a large circular tank or basin, with two strong jets throwing their limpid streams many feet high. In the sculptured forms there is some display of classic design; and the effect of many mouths and forms gushing forth almost instantaneously was altogether that of magic art, not unaided by the lines of trees on two sides being clipped or cut into semi-arched forms. The most powerful of the fountains is, however, a grand jet, characteristically named the *Géant*, or giant, for the incredible force with which it springs from its basin, and rises 125 feet high, being more

than the elevation of Napoleon's triumphal column, in the Place Vendôme, at Paris. An uninterrupted view of these exhibitions may be enjoyed from the river, which runs parallel with the road adjoining the park. Crouds flocked from all directions to witness the first gush of the fountains ; but their attention soon became directed to a royal party attended by footmen, from the palace, who came to witness the sights of the fair, and appeared especially amused with a family of vaulters and stilt-walkers. They were received with a slight buz of curiosity, but without that enthusiasm with which the English are accustomed to recognize, and, not unfrequently, to annoy royalty ; for

No man cried, God save them.

I now began to make a more minute survey of the preparations for amusement, for the fête was not yet in its equinoctial splendour. The most prominent of these were plots of the raised bank on one side, and at the termination of the principal walk, which

were enclosed with hurdles or frames, a platform being elevated and decorated with festooned curtains, &c. for an orchestra, and the whole hung round with illumination lamps. Towards evening, but long before dark, these enclosures were blazing with variegated splendour ; the bands commenced playing several lively French airs, and the area was occupied with groupes of waltzing and quadrilling votaries. As the evening darkened, lamps began to glisten in every direction, and the well-lighted cafés resembled so many Chinese lanterns ; and these, aided by the discordant sounds of scores of instruments, gave the whole scene an air of enchantment, or rather a slight resemblance to one of its exorcisms. The effect was, however, improved by distance. Accordingly, I stole through a solitary shrubby walk, which wound round the hill, and at length led me to a forest-like spot, or straggling wood, which flanked the whole of the carnival. Viewed from hence, it was, indeed, a fantastical illustration of French

gaiety, and it momentarily reminded me of some of Shakspeare's scenes of sylvan romance, with all their fays and fairy population.

The English reader who has not witnessed one of the fêtes of St. Cloud, may probably associate them with his own Vauxhall; but the resemblance is very slight. At one of these entertainments in France, there is much less attempted, but considerably more effected, than in England; and all this is accomplished by that happy knack which the French possess of making much of a little. Of what did this fête consist—a few hundred lamps—a few score of fiddlers, and about as much decoration as an English showman would waste on the exterior of his exhibition, or assemble within a few square yards. There were no long illuminated vistas, or temples and saloons red hot with oil and gas—but a few slender materials, so scattered and intermixed with the natural beauties of the park, as to fascinate, and not fatigue the eye and ear. In the mo-

dern reform of our Vauxhall, only one relic is spared to illustrate French taste in the decoration of their *fresco* entertainments. This is the long-remembered scenic groupe of the hermit in the dark walk, which is so placed among the trees and shrubs as to deceive scores of young folks with an idea of reality ; and the interest, not to say fondness, with which this contrivance is sought, and still admired, before the gaudier trappings of other parts of the gardens, brings me to a further illustration of the superior effect of intermingling art with nature. Even the pell-mell frolics of St. Cloud were better idealities of enjoyment, than the splendid promenade of Vauxhall, in the days of its olden celebrity ; for diamonds and feathers are often mere masquerade finery in such scenes—so distant are the heads and hearts of their wearers.

Night, with her poetic glooms, only served to heighten the lustre of the fairy fête ; and as I receded through the wood, the little shoal of light gleamed and twinkled through

“ branches overgrown,” and the distant sounds began to fall into solitary silence,—even saddening to meditation—so fast do the dying glories of festive mirth sink into melancholy—till at once, with the last gleam and echo, I found myself in a pleasant little glade on the brow of the hill. The day had been unusually hot—all was hushed stillness. But the darkening clouds were fast gathering into black masses :

The rapid lightning flames along the sky.
What terrible event does this portend ?

The stifling heat of the atmosphere was, however, soon changed by slight gusts of wind ; the leaves trembled ; and a few heavy drops of rain fell as harbingers of the coming storm : the pattering ceased ; an impressive pause succeeded—broken by the deepening roar of thunder. But the glorious aspect of the skies at this moment is indescribable in poetry—much less in the narrow confines of prose. They now appeared assembled in one dense panoply,

except when they became burnished by the gorgeous lightning—instantly followed up by deafening thunder—“ associating its horrors with the anger of heaven.” How awfully sublime is that picture of offended majesty—a storm ! what a lesson of infinite wisdom to the proud emmet of the creation—man ! But the world of imagination is exhausted on this subject ; and the bolder flights of philosophy can alone aid us in our approach to the knowledge of divine perfection. Every age and country has been impressed with its awe—on the naked savage, who flies from his desert shores for protection—and the royal sufferer of Sophocles :

He stood, and o'er his face his hands he spread
Shading his eyes ; as if with terror struck,
At something horrible to human sight.

In short, from the cottager who “ woos terror to delight him,” to the silken baron of civilization, or the philosopher pent up in his own ignorance and varnished unbelief.

The threatening storm hastened my re-

turn to the focus of the carnival. The partial sprinkling had already caused many of the dancers to withdraw to the cafés, and to the most sheltered parts of the park. The lightning became more and more vivid, and, at length, the thousands who had lingered in these groupings of gaiety, were fairly routed by pelting rain ; and the park, with a few lamps flickering out, and decorative finery drenched with rain, presented a miserable contrast with the festivities of the previous hour. The crowd streamed through the park-gate into the village, where hundreds of competitors shouted “ Paris, Paris ; ” and their swarms of diligences, cabriolets, and curtained carts, were soon freighted. One of these chateaux engaged to convey me to Paris for half a franc, in a large covered cart, with oil-skin curtains to protect the passengers in front. To my surprise I found the vehicle pre-occupied by twelve or fourteen well-dressed persons—male and female, who appeared to forget their inconvenient situa-

tion in sallies of laughter, which sometimes bordered on boisterous mirth. The storm increased ; lamps gleamed and flitted across the road ; and many of the horses plunged with their heavy loads, and swept along the line in resistless confusion ; for nothing can be less characteristic of timidity than French driving.

On reaching Paris, the streets resembled so many torrents, and in most places were not fordable, notwithstanding scores of persons, with the alacrity of mushrooms after rain, had placed themselves at the narrowest parts of the streams, with raised planks, or temporary bridges for crossing. Our load was *landed* under the arcade of the Hotel de Ville ; but the driver, in the genuine spirit of a London hackney-coachman, did not forget to turn the “ ill wind ” to his own account, by importuning me for a double fare.

I learned that the storm had been less tremendous in its consequences at St. Cloud and Paris than at Versailles, the lightning

having consumed a farm-house and barns near that town. It is an event worthy of notice, from its being part of the phenomenon of what is termed a returning stroke of lightning,* the circumstances of which are thus recorded in a popular philosophical journal.

“ On the 24th of September, 1826, at the moment when the lightning struck the ground, at the farm of Gali, near Versailles, M. B—— was violently affected by a returning stroke, at the distance of half a league from the place. The following are the circumstances of the case :—A violent storm occurred

* The returning stroke of lightning is well known to be due to the restoration of the natural electric state, after it has been disturbed by induction. Thus, if a person be brought into a highly-electric and negative state by induction, from the approximation of a body highly charged positively, and then the latter be discharged by means having no connexion with the negatively electrified person, the negative state of the latter will be immediately destroyed, and an effect, in part analogous to that of a positive discharge of electricity, will be produced. Some of the most serious accidents which occur from lightning are supposed to be produced in this way, not by the mere disturbance of electricity in a person only, but of the electricity of those bodies with which the person may be in contact ; and to which he accidentally serves as a conductor.—*Annales de Chimie*.

at Versailles and the neighbouring parts, at half-past nine o'clock. M. B., aged 72 years, was passing the Rue Dauphine, at a little distance from the Church of Notre Dame, when one of those whirlwinds so so common in the neighbourhood of large buildings, obliged him to turn round. He was then close to the party-wall of the houses 13 and 14, his right side being at a small distance from it. A metal-pipe was fixed up the front of the house in this place, bringing the rain from the roof to the level of the pavement. In this position M. B. felt a commotion, which he describes as if the right side of his body was roughly thrown towards the left, feeling, at the same time, much oppression, and vertigo, resembling that of drunkenness. The immediate effects were difficulty of motion on the left side, and a disturbed respiration; and it was with much difficulty, and only by resting frequently, that M. B. could reach the house of a neighbouring friend. It was there observed, that the tongue was embarrassed in its motions as well as the left side, but by the aid of attention, the agitation of the mind was calmed; the night passed moderately, and the next morning all was nearly in its ordinary state. In the evening, however, at the hour when the circumstance occurred, all the symptoms returned, and the same results occurred daily until the end of the week, when a physician was consulted. He immediately recognised the symptoms of compression on the brain and spinal-marrow, from which had resulted an incomplete paralysis of the tongue and the left arm and

leg. This speedily gave way under the hands of the physician, but the periodical returns occurred until the cure was completed."

"It would be difficult to prove the identity of the electric discharge which fired the farm of Gali, and struck M. B. ; but the latter cannot be attributed to a direct stroke ; for, at the moment when it happened, the intervals between the lightning and the thunder were such as to shew that the storm was not over Versailles. By a coincidence of circumstances, M. Demonferrand, who describes the case, was in the house No. 15, the whole of the evening, in an apartment contiguous to the metal-pipe, which appears to have served as a conductor for the electricity, but neither he nor any other person in the house felt the slightest disturbance. In the opposite house was a person in a bad state of health, and, therefore, perhaps, more sensible to electric changes, but neither did he experience any change in his feelings at the moment."

We are not permitted to allude to the Fête of St. Cloud as a scene of *pastoral* amusement, or of the primitive simplicity which is associated with that epithet. The French are not a pastoral people, although they are not less so than the English ; neither are the suburbs of a metropolis rural life. They are too near the pride of human

art for pastoral pleasures, and no aristocracy is more infested with little tyrants than the neighbourhood of great cities, the oppressors being too timid to trust themselves far out of the verge of public haunts, in the midst of which they would be equally suspicious.

Amusements are at all times among the best indications of national character ; a truth which the ancients seem to have exaggerated into their maxim *in vino veritas*. Here the national comparison is not “ odious.” Three Sunday fairs are held within six miles of Paris, in a park, as was once the custom at Greenwich: the latter, though a royal park, does not boast of the residence of Royalty, as does St. Cloud. The objection to the day of the French fêtes is cleared by another argument. But what would be the character of a week-day fair or fête in Kensington Gardens ? The intuitive answer will make the moral observer regret that man should so often place the interdict on his own happiness, and then pceevishly repine at his uncheery lot.



THE
Pleasures of Melancholy.

Sun of the sleepless ! melancholy star !
Whose tearful beam glows tremulously far,
Thou show'st the darkness thou canst not dispel,
How like art thou to joy remember'd well !
So gleams the past, the light of other days,
Which shines, but warms not with its powerless rays ;
Or night-beam Sorrow watcheth to behold,
Distinct, but distant ; clear, but, oh, how cold !

LORD BYRON—*Hebrew Melodies.*

THERE is melody in the storm, and music
in the wind !

In the early pages of this volume, I have
attempted to trace the workings of melancholy through infancy and childhood ;
and to show that wherever implanted, it
usually takes root, and luxuriates. It is often
known to damp the ardour of youth ; chill

the enthusiasm of genius ; sometimes to throw a gloom over the closing years of a well-spent life ; and in its common acceptance among us, it is thought to preclude enjoyment, and to ensepulchre man within himself. The overweening fondness of weak philanthropists disclaims this passion as the poison of life, and the spleen of men's souls. This is, indeed, a kind, but fruitless, attempt to reclaim a vagrant world, and to coax its inmates. But the muse of Melancholy has thousands of followers, and those not such as woo, and coquet with her, for an idle hour ; neither are they all voluntary victims to her rule, the majority of them being driven to seek comfort in each other's woes, and to mingle their grief in her common sorrow, when the world has already denied them its forced sympathies. To her the children of SENSIBILITY flock in crowds ; but they approach her oracle by various paths—solitary and sad—in their progress alike shunning the haunts of man, and sequestering their souls from converse

with his vanities. There is enough in Nature to replenish their minds, and lead them, step by step, to her store-houses of wisdom—not such as is usually sought in the subtlety of science, or the labyrinths of art; but that which enables them to find

Tongues in trees, books in running streams,
Sermons in stones,

and to “translate the subbornness of fortune into so happy a state.”

All have their *moments* of melancholy—from those occasioned by the unwelcome rebukes of conscience, to the sighs and sympathies of the parting hour. But how speedily are such impressions chased away by the uproar of mirth, or in the transitory joys of sense. Such men do not enter into the *pleasures* of melancholy, but rather avoid them as a contagion, which would break up their mimic circle of happiness, and strip life of its dearest magic.

Akin to the melancholy of childhood and youth (already quoted) is that of sickness and disease, the most dangerous, inasmuch

as it dries up the springs of recovery. This is a state in which well-regulated minds suffer least ; for it is only when the poignancy of afflicted nature is attended with the rackings of evil, that its effects are to be feared. In such scenes, cheerfulness and resignation are the consequences of a virtuous life ; but melancholy and despair are severe reproaches of human weakness, if not of shame and guilt. Here, her influence resembles the sorrowings after life's sweets, not such as lead to lasting enjoyments, but those which hasten corruption and decay.

To the children of frailty, with an epitome of their existence constantly before them, in the several stages of creation and dissolution, melancholy is sometimes the forerunner and follower of death. This is a proof of shortsightedness, or of unwillingness to appreciate the wise end of their being. Nevertheless, the links and bearings of families and friends are so closely wrought, that the first impression of death is melancholy—

from the blank which it occasions, or the close analogy it bears to the anticipated fate of the survivor.* This, however, is but cold philosophy against the fondness with which men cling to their darling world. It is too true that they trifle away their most precious hours, and pleased with what is called the poetry of life, they drive away contemplation, from time to time, till the only approach they make to so devout an exercise of the heart, is in the vapourings of disappointment, or the sickening of animal

* Let us hear what a popular contemporary author says on this point :

“ There are those to whom a sense of religion has come in storm and tempest ; and there are those whom it has summoned amid scenes of revelry and idle vanity ; there are those who have heard its ‘ still small voice ’ amid rural leisure and placid contentment. But, perhaps, the knowledge which cometh not to err, is most frequently impressed upon the mind during seasons of affliction ; and tears are the softening showers which cause the seed of heaven to spring and take root in the human heart.”—*Sir Walter Scott*.

When we consider that the writer of this sublime snatch of sentiment has furnished us with many accurate analyses of human nature, and that the above extract is from the last finished of his productions, it must carry his sincerity home to the most superficial and sceptical of his readers.

spirits—whence their melancholy. But it is only when the mind is, as it were, worn out and exhausted, and the imaginative appetite of intellect is “corrupt to the core,” that man pines under the melancholy of death. He then associates with a world of beings that exist but in the heated brain, and vanish at the first approach of reason. He persecutes himself with horrors of his own invention, till his ingratitude blackens into impiety. He is the constant slave of fear, though the stubbornness of his pride will not allow him to confess the dread of vengeance. Or, if these be not the workings of death-melancholy, the soul is hidden in the darkness of despair, and the day-spring of hope is banished never to re-dawn. But there have been instances of reclamation even from such extremities of error, in the last hours of fallen men ; and if the sensitive mind can enter into the ecstasies of such moments, how pure must be the equanimity of days and nights thus passed ; though each of our lives be but as a speck in eter-

nity, or as an air-bubble upon infinite space. We should not, however, trust ourselves to the perils of these hours; neither is their ordeal an absolute condition of our happiness, it being a boon of mercy. By such reflections as these, we are reminded that death, if an enemy, is our last; and if this belief were allowed to regulate life, the result would be very different from that of melancholy. The lives and writings of such men as have approached nearest perfection, will convince us that happiness is not unattainable, while a death-bed repentance but too closely resembles the former lives of those who cling to it as a last hope—as a plank on which they may walk from earth to heaven; yet men endure years of sacrifice and sorrow upon so slender a prospect. We are accustomed to lament the breaking-up of families, and the loss of friends in uncheery impressions; but there should be enough consolation amidst such sorrows to strengthen us against the approach of our own fate; and then the

fleeting melancholy that death creates, will clear off, and leave our hopes still brighter than it found them.

Among the most captivating charms of philosophic melancholy, are those to be found in the love of Nature; and such minds as enter into her joys, are, perhaps, best fitted for the *pleasures* of melancholy. In what may be termed the melancholy of art, all is profitless to the soul; but the melancholy of nature is so enlivened by change, that the most insensible of men find amusement in some of its reflections: for example, who is indifferent to the approach or progress of a summer storm!

In the musings of my early days, how often, and how fondly, have I lingered in the melancholy of nature; with what rapture have I listened to the music of her sounds—from the infant notes of spring to the forlorn melody of winter. Can the invention of man devise such harmony as the symphonies of rural sounds to be enjoyed in the country? How often have I

betaken myself to those leafy orchestras of song—the wood, the glade, and grove; and there have I revelled in the plaintiveness and pensiveness of forlorn love :

There I can sit alone, unseen of any,
And to the nightingale's complaining notes
Time my distresses, and record my woes.

In my garden, too, I have watched the fading of its frailest flowers : I have seen the lily droop its tender head, and shut up its chastity in the leafy shroud—the spread rose dishevelled in the wind—and the sickly exotic drooping at nightfall. Then, too, the busy rustle of wind through the shrubbery-walk, or among the golden pride of an autumnal landscape—the little whirl of that sublime and simple lesson, the sear and falling leaf : its progress from and to earth—its changes, flutterings, and decay, are not lost to the contemplatist.

Who can harmonize such fascination as the whistle of winds and the music of storms ! With what anxiety and interest do we listen to the gathering of a tempest

and all its discords ; and then trace its ravages through tender nature. In the grandeur and simplicity of sublimer scenes our delight will be proportionally enhanced ; in the majesty of mountains ; the density of aged forests ; the roar of water ; or the stillness of desert life. Amidst these stupendous beauties, man dwindles to the emmet, and the proudest of human triumphs resemble its minute labours.

The melancholy of night, from its constant recurrence, is, perhaps, less regarded than it merits. It is full of theme for reflection ; witness the inspired breathings of Milton, responded in the soul-stirring strains of Handel and Haydn. But when we turn to earth at such a season, we there find the *poison* of melancholy, in the thousand associations of evil with night—whence “ deeds of darkness.” We may there see vice, fled from the glorious light of day, as unsuited for her workings, lest reason should prompt detection, and discover her snares. All the lures of passion and the wiles of deceit are

then spread abroad to seduce the few followers of virtue, or the uncorrupt flower of youth, into the stinging wantonness of sensuality, and the wildness of her despair. How different is the night of Nature from that of man, and the repose of her scenes from the misrule of his sensual haunts ; what a contrast between the refreshing return of her morning, and the feverish agonies of his day-dreams.

The melancholy of mirth is also among my fondnesses, to enjoy which how often have I listened to her raptures, and mixed in her gayest fascinations. In her halls, too, have I watched the blandishments of beauty ; and leaped with ecstasy in the kindred spirit of her dance. But in a few short hours, the string of music and the sweet soul of song have died in silence ; the lively feet have fled ; and the roses of pleasure have ceased to bloom. At the table, where wit flashes but in the still shorter interval of sense and sorrow, leaving nought but empty roars, and man's finest affec-

tions to the maudlin song,—excess over-
topples its victims, one by one, and black
melancholy, in turn, takes the vacant seat,
till she has scared the last. Among the
children of chance, who, in reality, treat
the whole world as a ball, melancholy takes
the uppermost seat—in the blank stare and
stifled sigh, till she, “with a little pin, bores
through his castle wall, and—farewell !” In
an unpeopled theatre, and on the vacant
stage, whence precept, without puritanism,
steals into the hearts of men, I have lingered
and wantoned in the woes of melancholy,
while watching the nicety with which I have
seen the finery of its walls covered up from
vulgar light.

Next, the melancholy of art, in the decay
of her triumphs, and the mouldering of her
mightiest monuments. How often have I
gazed on these, till the pride of their
founders has even filled me with compassion
for their fall. Then, indeed, have I sor-
rowed for their greatness, and wept aloud
for the little span of their vanity. In a

deserted palace, and amidst the splendour of its solitary halls, I have traced the melancholy of envy and ambition, whilst reflecting on the dear purchase of their proudest victories. In the consecrated shrines of art I have seen the overweening devotions to honour, wealth, fame, and titled pride, crumble and fall into dust, and strew the floors with their piecemeal decay. Here have I seen tablets and trophies obscured with dank and leaves, till the shield of rank has been mocked and blotted out with the weeds of Nature. There, too, have I seen grass shoot up and luxuriate between the interstices of tombs, and fatten on the frail remains of princes, patriots, and philosophers. In short, I have strayed amidst such scenes of affecting reproof, till shame has banished me from their sepulchral gloom.

Of the common melancholy of bells and the superstitious associations to which they give rise in vulgar minds, I would speak with forbearance, whether as the harbingers of halcyon days, in the doleful knell, or in

the hallowed and hallowing rites of burial. Such influence is coeval with their invention. They commemorate our little joys, mingle with our deepest lament, and are the faithful monitors of our frail existence.

Bells, says Coleridge, are “ the poor man’s only music ; * ” and in the ages of merry England, the festivals of her calendar were welcomed with joyous peals in every village. On the birth of the squire’s heir, at his christening, his manhood, and marriage, bells were rung with “ the loud festivity of mirth.” But these customs are discontinued ; and the celebration of such happy events has given way to tidings of victory or partial defeat, through a long series of desolation, and dearly-bought triumph. How painful is this contrast between peace-

* There are but few of us who care to recollect our ancestors as bell-hangers : but sir Symonds d’Ewes, who was Lord of the Manor of Lavenham, in Suffolk, and one of the most learned antiquaries of his time, was a bell-ringer ; as was sir Matthew Hale, Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas. William Cecil, High Treasurer of England, was also a bell-ringer.

ful simplicity and semblance of joy. How many scenes of melancholy are called up by one of these ill-timed accompaniments of the orgies of war. They resemble the music of a sacrifice, contrived to drown the cries of its victims, and to make the multitude forget the widowhood and orphan woe which overshadow this false picture of glory, and dim the lustre of its boasted success. Neither is the gay peal of the bridal morning to be forgotten. It seems as a ratification of the altar oath to cherish the partner of our weal and woe—the consummation of earthly enjoyment; and the very sounds act as gladdening wine to the heart, by harmonizing with its ecstasies. Flowers were once strewn on such occasions, to propitiate the lives of the parties, in assimilating them with the gay face of Nature; but this rite has been progressively abolished, except in a few favoured districts, where the simplicity of rural life remains unbroken. Solemnity or impressive effect is likewise one of the charms of bells. In

the country it strikes on the ear undisturbed, and associates with the plaintive minstrelsy of birds, a day of overcast, or the dying splendour of sunset ; in the still-life of villages and small towns, it is not unheard, and as a memento of death it is not always unheeded. To the contemplatist, in his noon-tide and evening walk, it is not unwelcome ; and if, perchance, he may have become giddy with looking on “ the wheels of vicissitude,” it will guide him back to the spring of his reflections. The same sounds that welcome us into life, and celebrate our joys, may thus probably knell out at our departure : this is but a fragment of coincidence ; for the element that gave us birth is constantly yawning for our return. Whilst indulging such reflections, how have I luxuriated in the mournful melody of bells, and the deepening melancholy of their sounds.

In cities, bells may be said to lose their effect ; for art is too clamourous to allow their interference. Nevertheless, almost

every city of Europe has its *great bell*. The occasion on which that of St. Paul's Cathedral is tolled, is of more than ordinary import; for it announces the death of royalty, an event that seldom fails to reach the most indifferent heart, since it has a double claim on its sensibilities. In some London parishes, there is a practice of tolling bells at fixed hours, the observance of which has been secured by legacies of persons, who, doubtless, intended the custom as an aid to daily devotion. Nothing can be more dismal than the monotony of the rolling toll of Nôtre Dame, at Paris; but it well accords with the venerable exterior of the cathedral. In the Kremlin, at Moscow, is a bell weighing 443,772 lbs. English, and valued at nearly £70,000, which, on festivals, the peasants visit as they would resort to a sanctuary, crossing themselves as they descend and ascend the steps of the belfry. The tolling or ringing of "great bells" on special occasions, is still observed; and it is a grate-

ful relic of the importance which was once attached to the influence of bells. This frequently occurs in the imagery of pensive poetry. Spenser has many illustrations; Shakspeare, in his "iron tongue of midnight;" and Gray, in his elegiac allusions, are well known. Marvell calls music, "the mosaic of the air," a term peculiarly applicable to bells; and to them we may ascribe nearly all the effects attributed by sir William Temple to the power of music—"to raise joy and grief; to give pleasure and pain; to give motions to the feet as well as to the heart; to compose disturbed thoughts; to assist and heighten devotion itself."

Akin to bells may be mentioned the melancholy interest of sun-dials, those silent monitors of heaven, which are still retained on the walls or lawns of mansion-houses, sculptured with quaint mottoes and hieroglyphics, or occupying the surface of a solitary pedestal: on the gable-ends, or on the towers of old churches, they are not uncommon; but they are seldom cherished

with repairs.* These humble mementos of “time and tide,” seldom fail to excite the curiosity of children, and with not less ac-

* In some of the London Inns of Court, whose monastic character has already been mentioned, a few of these indicators remain. Thus, in one of the courts of the Temple, there is a sun-dial which has been repaired so recently as 1812. In New Inn there is one with the motto, “Time and tide tarry for no man;” and in Clement’s Inn, is one supported by a cast of a kneeling negro; to this groupe some lines were addressed a few years since. In Lyon’s Inn there is an old sun-dial in a ruinous state, having lost its gnomon, and the figures being effaced: It bears the letters G. T. C. In the garden of Gray’s Inn, opposite Verulam Buildings, venerated as the residence of the great lord Bacon, is a sun-dial which was once the monitor of that illustrious philosopher; and, probably, from its contemplation he drew some of his invaluable treasures on “time.”

[“*Horas non numero nisi serenas*”—is the motto of a sun-dial near Venice. Bloomfield calls the sun-dial a companion of the lonely hour:

‘Once more, companion of the lonely hour,
I’ll turn thee up again.’

The widow to her Hour-glass.

The effect of *Chimes* is thus alluded to by Wordsworth:

curacy than Archimedes in his diagrams on the sand, have I seen boys write a dial

‘ Sing those witty rhymes
About the crazy old church-clock
And the bewildered chimes.’

“ If I were a moralist, I might disapprove the ringing in the new, and ringing out the old year.

‘ Why dance ye, mortals, o’er the grave of Time?’

Rousseau has admirably described the effect of bells on the imagination, in a passage in the *Confessions*, beginning ‘ *Le son des cloches m’a toujours singulièrement affecté,*’ &c.]

For these last illustrations I am indebted to a paper in a recent magazine, entitled, “ On a Sun-dial,” and written by Mr. Hazlitt. It is, perhaps, one of the most graceful and elegant of his late compositions. My reader should see it, lest he suspect me of borrowing more than I have acknowledged, although I shall suffer severely by the comparison. I must, however, vindicate myself in one coincidence—the allusion to bells in Catholic countries. My note was made in France, in 1826; and Mr. Hazlitt’s was published towards the close of 1827. This brings me to the chimes at Calais, whose long-lingering music every traveller must recollect. I suspect they resemble the chimes in Holland, which Mr. Hazlitt describes. I well remember their monotony as I sauntered about the grand *place* or square of Calais. My stay there was one of protracted suspense, what Swift calls “ the life of a spider”—

in dust, and stake their wooden pen for its gnomon. Could the urchin philosophers

waiting for a friend from England, to accompany me in my first visit to Paris. How many hours I whiled away on the wooden pier, between a book and watching the first smoke of the *bâteau de vapeur*. Every night, too, I crossed the *place* to my hotel. Fortunately it was in summer, and I often halted to hear the chimes “out.” There were, too, the revolving lights gleaming on the whitened tower of the Court-house. I passed most of my indoor time at a large rambling house, near the Royal Hotel. We landed at midnight, and the silence of the town beneath a cloudless moon-lit sky, was delightfully placid. The entrance to our *domicile* was through a door cut in a large wooden gate, with a long bell-handle dangling at its lintern. Our apartment was a spacious dining-room, fronting the street, with two windows, and a window at the back nearly blinded by a grape-vine. The furniture was old and rickety, consisting of a few common chairs, and a sofa stuffed in yellow silk; the last was the only luxury of the room. The kitchen was inhospitable, dark, and dreary; but it was summer-time: the servant’s name was *Thérèse*: the proprietor was an academician, as I afterwards learned by a brass plate on his door. He had three or four pupils, and had become naturalized since the peace of 1814. His room was a kind of *studio*—half French and half English—with a guitar, an old piano-forte, and a spinning-wheel, a favourite

select a more appropriate method and material to work out their little problems of futurity? Shadows in the sun-beam are also among the earliest appeals to the perceptions of children; they pause with wonder on this phenomenon; and in after-life they are reminded by the poet, that we

Come like shadows, so depart.

Sun-dials and hour-glasses have, however, long given place to prouder inventions: and the latter have almost become mythological emblems of time, or, at best, com-

parrot, and a raven. He had written an antiquarian history of Calais, which he was about to print, and had just commenced oil-painting on panel, though without any knowledge of the rules of art. I long to know how he succeeded, for I have seldom seen a more indefatigable genius. In the town he was much respected as a mediator between the French and English in their tattling disputes. There was much of the good Samaritan about him, and like other good men, he sometimes indulged his benevolence towards his countrymen at his own cost. Altogether, his petite sentimental servant, (her name, as Leigh Hunt would say, a piece of romance), his wife a *bas bleu*, and his own studious and secluded habits, seemed to accord with the conventual character of the house.

panions of the moody muse. Perhaps they measure the sand of life with melancholy truth ; and the periodical turnings of the hour-glass come too fast upon the refined student of humanity. The vulgar almost regard them with superstitious dread, and the killers of time consider them as useless mummery, fit only for religious cells and caverns. With them, their simplicity becomes too plain to be pleasing.

Clocks are, also, aids to melancholy ; for their solemn truth breaks through the tracery and finery of art. House-clocks, though they be cased up with japan and gilt-work, are often unwelcome intruders to such as are "late to take rest." Sitting up with a favourite author, as Montaigne, Burton, or Sterne, writing an overdue letter to a *chère amie*, or indulging a long fit of dreamy reverie, (and this, when all the household are in bed,) you seem to have the world to yourself, and the hours glide on with thought, so quickly, but delightfully, that you would feign stay time.

You hear the heavy sluggish bell of the hall rumble out one—two—three ; and almost simultaneously the tinkle of an oracle perked on an antique bracket on the landing ; and the crystal sound on your own chimney-piece vibrating through glass, alabaster, marble, and or-moulu. Then the heavy toll of the church-clock, and the bawling echo of the watchman without doors—and all relapses into silence. You fancy you hear a noise in the passage—you open the door—and in comes a puff of nipping frosty air. You re-seat yourself—but the charm is broken. Your lamp begins to grow dim ; you hear the oil gurgle like the last breath of life ; you turn towards the fireplace with the poker crosswise, as you placed it three hours since—all is extinct. The room is as yet warm, and you resolve to sit a little longer. Then come a few melancholy dreams of youth : you remember how you were frightened when at school, from all the stories of giants, ogres, and fairies, to old Aubrey, Ferriar, Dr.

Hibbert, and sir Walter Scott. This brings you to the superstitions of master-minds—from Saul to lord Byron. Then you stray into the mazes of presentiments of death, and perchance there is a couch or chair in the room, on which your dear mother sank on the fitful attack of her last illness. You retrace the events of that fatal night; you remember its dread alarm—and the moment when the icy hand of death marked her for its own. Alas! how drear and rayless is that retrospect; and long,—long,—long,—will it be ere its recollection shall fade away! Had the grief been isolated on the brain, it might have disappeared in the sun-light of youth and hope; but

When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions!

In these moments, you cling to consolation like the dying mariner to the fragment of a wreck. The solemn tick of your watch, with its dial peeping from a fancy case, reminds you of the time when you could not sleep with a watch in your room, from its super-

stitious association with the beatings of a harmless insect, vulgarly termed the death-watch : perchance you recollect some beautiful lines, as those addressed by lord Herbert, of Cherbury, *to his watch* :

Incessant minutes, whilst you move you tell
 The time that tells our life, which though it run
 Never so fast or far, your new begun
 Short steps shall overtake ; for though life well
 May 'scape his own account, it shall not yours.
 You are death's auditors, that both decide
 And scan whate'er that life inspir'd endures,
 Past a beginning ; and through you we bide
 The doom of fate, whose unrecall'd decree,
 You date, bring, execute ; making what's new,
 Ill ; and good, old ; for as we die in you
 You die in time, time in ETERNITY :—

this is, indeed, a happy haven for the melancholy mind.

Churches and Church-yards, with their hallowed silence, are sites of melancholy. Beneath your feet men lie sleeping in their graves ; and as you raise your eyes from their memorials, either the clear bell, or the tarnished and time-worn face of the dial on the tower, denotes to you the universal standard by which their lives were mea-

sured. There you may calculate that 700,000 whirls of its minute-hand, will afford you the longest of their lives ; and upwards of 168 of these whirls are effected within a week :

Thereby to see the minutes how they run,
How many make the hour full complete,
How many hours bring about the day,
How many days will finish up the year,
How many years a mortal man may live.

The week-day visit to the interior of a church, is forcibly interesting. The opening of the ponderous door, the footsteps, and your very voice are re-echoed. As you walk up the nave, you think of Milton's

Studious cloyster's pale,
The high embowed roof,
With antique pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.

You ascend into the tower, and there inspect the huge machinery of the parish clock ; and from thence to the bell-loft, where a single stroke would vibrate throughout your frame. At length, by a

cautious ascent through the dust of ages, you reach the platform of the tower, and your toil is repaid with such a view as Hollar drew from the tower of St. Mary Overie, in Southwark. When I last visited that venerable pile, I thought I saw the dust of its monkish founders quietly reposing in the vast lofts of the tower. At St. Alban's I clambered through buttresses lit by loop-holes ; but I was more than recompensed by the picturesque view from its summit.

In Catholic countries, the churches are almost always open ; but nothing can be more dismal than the monotony of *the Bell*, from the tinkling of the village, to the deep and heavy sound of the cathedral toll. This melancholy is not a little increased by the gloomy architecture of the smaller churches, the damp and cavernous chillness which strikes you on entering them, and the disgusting objects which desecrate their precincts ; and their exterior and interior present affecting pictures of devotedness,

and pollution, not unfrequently mixed with the ludicrous. At St. Denis, I remember seeing soldiers, with the full band playing at their head, march into the cathedral, making the sacred edifice ring with military music. Every one has heard of the cathedral of Abbeville, one of the most magnificent in France. It is, indeed, a monument of gothic beauty ; and the interior has all the freshness of recent finish. My visit was in the falling glooms of evening, just at the termination of vespers. Its altars, relics, and paintings, are celebrated all over the world. There were not more than six or seven persons at prayers : one of whom was a boy, about eleven or twelve years old, kneeling in a chair, with his eyes and hands raised to heaven, in all the fervour and simplicity of devotion. He would have been a good study for a painter. The cathedral and church of Beauvais are likewise noble structures. In the latter is a stupendous organ, whose thunder a young priest was pealing through the majestic aisles and

avenues. Nothing can be more inspiring than the music of Catholic festivals. I was present at one at Nôtre Dame, when the archbishop of Paris officiated. The deep bass of the serpent was full of melancholy, even when mingled with the lively strains of the orchestral accompaniments.

One of the most beautiful pictures of royal melancholy, is that of the sufferings of King Richard II. as drawn by Shakspeare. Who does not remember the scene with Aumerle and others, in Act III.; the King's querulous answer, "of graves and worms, and epitaphs;" the crown scene with Bolingbroke; and Richard's soliloquy in the dungeon of Pomfret castle :

For now hath time made me his numb'ring clock :
My thoughts are minutes ; and with sighs they jar
Their watches on to mine eyes, the outward watch
Whereto my finger, like a dial's point,
Is pointing still, in cleansing them from tears.
Now, sir, the sound, that tells what hour it is,
Are clamourous groans, that strike upon my heart,
Which is the bell : So sighs, and tears, and groans,
Show minutes, times, and hours.

Hamlet and Jaques teem with philosophic

melancholy ; but the satire of the “ noble Timon,” will sear and cauterize ungrateful man. The pictures of Care, Debate, &c. and the beautiful Daphnaida of Spenser, are well known ; Milton’s *Il Penseroso* I have already quoted, as well as the quaint old Burton. How many beautiful effusions have been written after reading the Book of Job. Such narratives as the prison scene of lady Jane Grey and sir Walter Raleigh, on the night before their execution, are well suited for meditative melancholy.

Among the literature of our times, no passages are more powerfully impressed on the minds of readers, or more universally admired, than such as delineate the plaintive and pensive woes of deep and settled melancholy. In the earlier writings of lord Byron these may be met with ; and in this vein, Moore is peculiarly successful :

As a beam o’er the face of the waters may glow,
While the tide runs in darkness and coldness below ;
So the cheek may be tinged with a warm sunny smile,
Tho’ the cold heart to ruin runs darkly the while.

In the poems of Campbell, Rogers, and

Montgomery, are many elegant and powerful examples of this passion : the stanzas of Watts, Hemans, and Landon, are full of pathos ; and those of Neele become still more attractive, by the afflicting circumstance of his recent death, attributed to a fit of lurid melancholy.

In particularizing even a few of the most familiar sites consecrated to melancholy, can we forget two in Warwickshire—Gaveston's and Kenilworth ; Cumnor in Oxfordshire, and Woodstock in Berkshire.* In olden time, it was the taste of fashion to dedicate groves, boscages, and alcoves, to melancholy, silence, and other imaginary spirits. One of these may not be unacceptable :

MELANCHOLIE.

Inscribed in Old English characters on a root-seat, at

NURSERY WESTFELTON.

O come not to these peacefull bowres
Chagrin'd at humane follie :

* Gaveston's, or Blacklow Hill, the place where the ill-starred favourite of Edward II., Piers Gaveston, was mur-

Nor censure here my harmlesse houres
Of blisefulle melancholie.

For if ye spurne the ioyes serene
From solitude accruing,
Mixe with the busie world againe,
Or wealthe or fame pursuinge.

But quarrelle not with humane-kinde,
For little faultes offendinge ;
Better to beare with what ye finde,
Than marre it in the mendinge.

Soe shall ye walke eche crowded courte
And smile at humane follie ;
Or pleas'd, like mee to boures resorte,
And feaste on melancholie.

Shenstone, the “wailing poet of Leasowes,” must not be forgotten ; although the artificial paradise which he formed, lives but in his plaintive verse.

Some of my readers may remember the little terrestrial paradise at the foot of Box-hill ; Mr. Tyers’s anti-Vauxhall, with its *concealed clock*, and Il Penseroso wood,

dered. For an illustration of Cumnor, see Mickle’s Ballad—
and for Woodstock, Stanzas written with charcoal on a
shutter by Elizabeth, while prisoner at Woodstock : the
two last in Percy’s Relics.

at Denbies, near Dorking; the rustic temples at the Rookery and Wotton Place; the hermitages and mossy cells of the Deepdene, with Mr. Howard's oratory and laboratory; and this fairy-land, as it is now disposed by the classic taste of the author of "Anastasius." *

RETROSPECTION, or the charm of looking back to our first years, belongs to the inspirations of melancholy; and the periodical recurrence of certain seasons is amongst the strongest incentives to this passion. Then come the golden dreams of childhood and youth that have slid by unnoticed, as if reserved for the reflection of graver years. All its events pass before us like the scenes of a phantasmagoria, till we say with the learned Arab, "I went to the place of my birth, and I said—the friends of my childhood where are they? and an echo answer-

* See the Promenade round Dorking, Second edition.—The solitary beauty of the vales of this district is scarcely exceeded by the picturesque splendour of the prospect from its hills.

ed, where are they ?” I remember, when a boy, walking to see the house in which I was born—a few days before it was pulled down : it was to me an event not easily to be forgotten ; and there are few persons who do not treasure up similar affection for the place of their birth.

Visiting the last homes of genius is, perhaps, one of the most impressive pursuits of retrospection. How many sites are there in England thus consecrated by great names. At St. Alban’s they show you the bones of the good duke Humphrey. Washington Irving tells us that he saw the dust of Shakspeare, in the vault of the church at Stratford-on-Avon ; and the enthusiasm with which he visited this shrine was not exceeded by the discovery of Cheops’ dust in the pyramid, or the royal pilgrimage to Becket’s tomb ; Wolsey’s bones were found about thirty years since, at Leicester, in a stone coffin, subsequently used as a horse-trough, at a neighbouring inn—what an antidote to the witchery of pride and power.

In Hamlet, "that piece," says Shaftesbury, "which appears to have most affected English hearts," how sublime is the churchyard reflection on the skull of Yorick, which grosser spirits have imitated in their bacchanal moments.

To stand on the shore of the sea, and watch its ebb and flow, is one of the most enchanting amusements of solitude. The very sight of the ocean, but more especially the first sight, is calculated to impress the mind with awe. How much is conveyed in the single reflection, that each of our lives may be compared with eternity as a drop of water to the illimitable expanse of the sea. The most delightful marine scenery in England is that of the Undercliff, in the Isle of Wight; and one of the happiest recollections of my life is my first morning walk along that shore. It is an enchanting picture of forlorn and desert nature, frowning with melancholy and sullen grandeur. Shakspeare says

Like as the waves make towards the pebble shore
So do our minutes hasten to their end ;
Each changing place with that which goes before,
In sequent toil all forwards do contend.

Ossian sung his *carmen triumphale*, and
loved to invoke the spirit of the storm, on
the sea shore ; and lord Byron says,

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar.

Indeed, he is the *Vernet* of poetry ; and his
love of the sea rendered his life almost am-
phibious. The sea, the shore, its pebbles, and
sands, are emblems of infinity ; and in those
districts, where the encroachments of the
ocean are gradually destroying islands and
continents, and carrying them to other
spheres, the lesson soars above the pride of
science ; and thus man, “ with God himself
holds converse.”

In the retrospective dreams of youth,
how fondly do we remember when the lost
toy was to us as the merchant’s wrecked
vessel ; our attachment to those, from whom

we then thought none but death would sever us ; the little holiday galas, and periodical visits to the play, and the tender parting at the close of the festive season—the iron that entered into one's soul. Then the school friendships, brittle as life itself ; for dropping which there seems to be a maxim, as for acquaintance made at a public resort. This is the *how d'ye do* of life ; but how few meet at its close to say the *good bye*. More heads have been made to dance by *Alexander's Feast*, than by the virtuous lives of Socrates or Cato ; but the *high spirits* of youth generally fall in after-life, when they seem to have poured out all their flow of soul, which floated them for a time, but quickly evaporated, and left qualities less welcome to the world. Then we date our reminiscences of PHILLO, who used to scribble newspapers for his school-fellows for a few pence, and was a retailer of prosody and arithmetic ; but is now writing for his subsistence, and is, by turns, historian and anecdotist, essayist, song-

writer, and necrologist ; and a topographer of books, hills, libraries, and green fields. Then we call up some grand school event, as a game of chess that, in duration, did not quite equal those of the Chess Clubs. Franklin compares the world to a game of chess, and, perhaps, the same number excel in each ; still it would be better for men if the game of life impressed them with the difficulties of chess. *Hope is the Queen—* but

Lose not the Queen, for ten to one,
If she be lost, the game is gone.

There is an episode in these reminiscences, which I hope the reader will pardon me for introducing, especially as it respects a spot which has recently obtained some lettered fame ; and as the circumstances of the late re-visit to this land of my youth are not altogether irrelevant to the title prefixed to these pages.

BRAMBLETYE HOUSE.

On the borders of Ashdown Forest, in the county of Sussex, stands the picturesque ruin of Brambletye

House, a place of some notoriety in the time of the Protector, but not of sufficient importance to obtain mention in history. A novelist of the present day has, however, rescued Brambletye from its "unlettered fame," by interweaving a few slender scenes of the lives of its possessors, with a due preponderance of fiction, and thus diverting some portion of public attention to the opening scenes of his narrative. From him we learn, that Brambletye, or, as it is termed in *Doomsday Book*, Brambertie House, after the conquest, became the property of the earl of Mortain and Cornwall; and that, towards the close of the seventeenth century, it came into the occupation of the Comptons—the heroes of his novel; and from the arms of that family impaling those of Spencer, still remaining over the principal entrance, with the date, 1631, in a lozenge, it is conjectured that an old moated house, which had hitherto been the residence of the proprietors, was abandoned in the reign of James I. by sir Henry Compton, who built the extensive and solid baronial mansion, commonly known by the name of Brambletye House. The Comptons, it appears, from their courage and loyalty to the Stuarts, had been heavy sufferers, both in purse and person, during the civil wars. One of them was put to death at the battle of Hopton Heath, and two others accompanied Charles in his exile. Sir John Compton, a branch of this family, having preserved much of his property from the committee of sequestration, displayed rather more splendour than fell to the lot of most of the cavaliers who

took an equally conspicuous part against the parliament armies. Although never capable of any regular defence, yet Brambletye being hastily fortified, refused the summons of the parliamentary colonel, Okey, by whom it was invested, and speedily taken. By some subsequent freak of fortune, the mansion became deserted, and it now presents an interesting, though not time-worn, ruin.

But my recollection of Brambletye is blended with associations of a more pacific character. On the same estate, though, doubtless, of more recent date than the mansion, stands a farm house, and to this property are attached two mills. Thither, when about seven years old, and like another puny plant, I was removed from a London atmosphere. My journey to East Grinstead, the nearest town, in a long-bodied coach; my quarantine in the market-room, while I was handed round to the farmers by my uncle, as "his nephew;" my jolting ride to Brambletye; the smothering caresses of my four maiden cousins; and my astonishment at the bright dogs, blazing logs, and chimney machinery; are matters of trivial interest to the general reader. At that time, count Romford and his stoves were not so well known in the wilds of Sussex, as they now are in the back settlements of North America, and it was some time before I became reconciled to the comforts of chimney corners for the luxury of polished grates; but this reconciliation was mainly brought about by the cracking fagot, which, with its brilliant flame, lit up every

corner of the room, and gleamed along its polished tables and benches.

The family at Brambletye, consisted of my uncle, a good specimen of the sturdy yeoman ; his wife, a portly dame, on the shady side of fifty-eight ; three daughters ; and a son, then a half grown youth. Another inmate was a land-surveyor, who was considered as one of the family ; and had he only repaid them with his company, they would have been gainers, for he was the life and soul of all our little festivals. To please my vanity, he drew a plan of an estate, to which he attached my name and title, but whether the property was like the Atlantis of the ancients, or whether I forfeited my claim by losing the rent-roll, I am unable to determine ; but I know that I never gained possession. He also made a Hogarthian sketch of "ringing pigs," in which he introduced my urchin face just peeping above the paling ; but he incurred the sore displeasure of the servant girl, by representing her astride one portion of the pig-stye.

Hours and hours have I passed in clambering the tottering staircases of the old mansion. The people in that part, called it *Old Place*, and it then contained perfect rooms ; whilst the vaults afforded excellent cellarage for home-made wine, potatoes, &c. It originally possessed three towers, with cupola tops, and large copper vanes, two of which (from a drawing in my possession) were entire in 1780. The principal entrance was by an arched gate, with immense posterns surmounted with similar cupolas,

but the connecting wall between that and the secondary gate was then in ruins. It is, altogether, a rural retreat, being almost embosomed in forest scenery, and from the lowness of its site, scarcely discernible at a mile distant ; but well calculated for the abode of a jocund cavalier—an odd admixture of fox-hunting and politics—just such as the novelist has made him *stand out* on his page, as the painters of that time have done on their canvass. The old “moated” house to which he has alluded, stood still deeper in the forest vale. It was furnished with a ponderous drawbridge, and other fortifying resources. I remember we put into its hall one day during a heavy fall of snow, during a surveying excursion, when my curiosity was soon satisfied on being told it was *haunted*,—an idea somewhat fostered by the licentious character of its former occupants.

As I became familiarized with the country, the attraction of *Old Place* rather increased than wore off. I delighted to range about its walls, with as much triumph as Okey or Lilburne did in the days of its better fortune. I had already learned to venerate the ruin as a wreck of antiquity, and to speculate on its fall with as much interest as antiquarians have the removal of Stonehenge. It still appeared to me a *stupendous* building ; and had the rank of its occupant been left to my decision, it certainly could not have been lower than an earl ; but not a king ; for nothing is so vague as the ideas which children have of palaces, since they collect them from the nursery literature of fairy tales. I was still at a loss for the

history of *Old Place*: the parson came from East Grinstead to fish in the mill-stream, and he set me to dig worms for his line ; but in return gave me no information. The outline of the building long remained in my mind's-eye ; and the winds whistling through its shattered tower, and the paneless casement, were in my ears ; but the earliest striking resemblance which occurred to me was in my first reading the unpretending stanzas—" Mary the Maid of the Inn." I thought of the ivy clinging to its tower—the fatal branch—and my early associations of horror, which the above stanzas were not calculated to allay.

* * * * *

In the autumn of 1827, about a score of years from the preceding date, I was induced to re-visit Brambletye ; and had I, as the vulgar say, been dropped from the clouds, the town of East Grinstead could not have appeared more strange. If the reader recollects, its situation is one of almost unparalleled beauty, being on the brow of a commanding hill, and belted with some of the finest forest scenery in England. The church is Gothic, built about 25 years, at an immense expense, for which fact the parish will vouch. But they have the boast of possessing one of the most beautiful of modern-built churches. All I can say of the town is, that it is dull and uninteresting ; notwithstanding I was once accustomed to think it a London in miniature.

During the interval of my visits, the main road, from which a lane branches off to Brambletye, was

entirely re-cut through an immense chalk hill, so as to save a mile in the distance ; an improvement of which the present occupants have reason to be proud. As I drew near the lane, about half a mile from the town, a few faint shadowy traces began to gleam across my recollection ; I fancied I knew the forms of a few small cottages on the crest of the hill ; but the first glimpse of a windmill, the shafts of which once struck terror into me,—first satisfied me of the identity of the neighbourhood ; and looking down from the very summit of the hill, I saw the grey cupola of Brambletye in the solitary stillness of desolation and decay. I hurried on with all that blissful ecstasy which a traveller feels on returning to his long-lost home. My eye lingered till, by the descent of the hill, the tower disappeared in the wood. At length I reached the lane. I clambered over the gate, (unluckily fastened) and did not halt till I regained a view of the tower. My approach was, indeed, a little struggle of human suffering. It seemed to me an optical illusion, (as I am aware, a common effect, though not always noticed.) It was a *camera*, and not a scene of real life. The towers which I once viewed as stupendous, were mere buttresses, the windows and doors tiny, and, altogether, a piece of mimic grandeur. In like manner, the farmhouse appeared a small cottage, the barns huts, and the mill-stream a trickling ditch ; and the lime-trees in front of the house, which I had considered as forest-like shelter, now appeared stunted in their growth. I made my way to the interior, where the effect was

continued : the paved kitchen, the trim parlour, the pantry,—all receded ; even Gulliver at Lilliput could not have felt more surprise, although he has the aid of wit and philosophy in its delineation.

Having obtained the key of the only entire room, I hastened across the adjoining field, and in a few moments I stood within the principal porch of Brambletye House. Here, such was the summary of my feelings. Within two hundred years the mansion has been erected ; by turns the seat of baronial hospitality and civil feud—the best and basest feelings of mankind ;—the loyalty of cavaliers ; the fanatic outrage of Roundheads ; and, ultimately, of wanton destruction. This was evident from the mutilated state of some parts which probably bore armorial or other symbols of rank and gentility—so scrupulous are levellers in displaying their hatred of legitimacy. The gate through which col. Lilburne and his men entered, was blocked up with a hurdle ; and the court-yard in which he marshalled his forces, covered with high flourishing grass ; the towers have become mere shells ; but the vaults, once stowed with luxuries and weapons, still retained much of their original freshness. What a contrast between these few wrecks of turbulent times and the peaceful scene by which they are now surrounded—a farm and two water-mills—on one side displaying the stormy conflict of passion and petty desolation—and, on the other, the smiling attributes of humble industry. Alas ! on a farewell glance, I learned by visitors' names penciled

on the wall, (and not unknown to me) that I was not the first to sympathize with the fate of Brambletye.*

Within these few years, through an almost unpardonable disregard for their associations, the lodge, and some part of the mansion, have been pulled down; the moated house has shared the same fate—for the sake of materials—an expectation in which I rejoice to hear the destroyers have been disappointed—their intrinsic worth not being equal to the labour of removing them. The work of destruction would, however, have extended to the whole of the ruin, had not some guardian hand interfered for its préservation.

The melancholy of certain animals should not, however, be passed over unnoticed. Shakspeare, in Henry iv. has the following “ quips and quiddities.”

Falstaff. 'Sblood, I am as melancholy as a gib cat, or a lugged bear.

* Here I learned that Brambletye had been visited by hundreds of tourists during the two preceding summers. The good housewife told me they borrowed her chairs, and other accommodations for their gipsey fêtes; some of them had not the courtesy to leave the seats in the adjoining field. I was, however, once guilty of a worse offence. When I visited Wotton, for the Promenade round Dorking, I was without a shilling in my pocket, and could not reward my conductress. The reader may recollect I have introduced the girl's answer to one of my questions. Lady Morgan may well say of tourists, —the only return these fellows make is to put you in their book.

P. Henry. Or an old *lion*, or a lover's lute.

Falstaff Yea, or the drone of a Lincolnshire bagpipe.

P. Henry. What say'st thou to a *hare*, or the melancholy of Moreditch.

The "lordly lion," as he is called by Young, often denotes this passion in his confinement. The story of the lion at Versailles, a few years since, who, on the death of his favourite dog, became disconsolate and miserable, is well known to the readers of natural history. Bears are, perhaps, the most solitary of all quadrupeds; the brown species frequently choosing for its abode the hollow of a tree, in which it lives during the winter without provisions; or in caves, on beds of grass, leaves, and moss. The attachment of bears to their young is proverbial, although they are unsparingly sacrificed to the avarice and amusement of unfeeling bipeds. Stories of bears in the polar regions, seldom fail to excite momentary sympathy in their readers; indeed, they exhibit traits of affection which are not always to be found in nobler animals. Cats are likewise subject to the influence of

melancholy ; and this fact is attested by a writer in the Gentleman's Magazine, who saw a cat attempt *suicide*, by repeatedly throwing itself head foremost from a high shelf on a stone floor ; and though it did not accomplish its purpose, yet it was so bruised, as to render its destruction humane.* Sonnini relates an anecdote of the Angora cat, a native of Egypt, which kept by his side in his solitary moments, and often interrupted him in his meditations by affectionate caresses ; and, in his absence, sought and called for him with great in-

* The above circumstance will hardly obtain belief, except among persons conversant with the phenomena of natural history. Lord Kaimes relates this anecdote :—A brood of stone-chatters, taken from the nest, were inclosed in a cage ; the door was left open to admit the mother, and was then shut upon her. After many attempts, finding it impossible to get free, she first put her young to death, and then dashed out her own brains on the side of the cage. Similar stories of parrots and domesticated birds are very frequent. I recollect an instance of a parrot exhibiting tokens of joy for upwards of an hour, on the return of its mistress, after an absence of some months : the lady was absent on the following day for three or four hours, during which time the poor bird died of what may be termed excessive grief.

quietude. Hares are, however, the most interesting in their melancholy characteristics. They are so timid as to be fascinated by fear ; even a falling leaf disturbs them. They live in solitude and silence, except occasionally assembling by moonlight, to sport together, when their savage enemies are asleep. Their cries, when taken, resemble those of an infant ; but this appeal to man, though in the semblance of his own nature, is ineffectual. Cowper domesticated three hares, and his account of them is full of pathos and fine feeling : what congenial companions must they have been in his melancholy musings ! Thomson says,

Poor is the triumph o'er the timid hare ;

—though not a sentiment of his epicurism. The analogous sensibilities of the hare may be carried still further : timid men in the world, resemble hares in the chase : a more classical comparison will, however, be in that of a sensitive heart to the heel of Achilles, in the siege of Troy ; it is the

most assailable part, at which scores of little Hectors may let fly their shafts.

Of the varieties of melancholy to which the human mind is incident, it would be tedious, in this place, to give a mere outline : neither would they illustrate my subject—
“ a melancholy of mine own, compounded from many simples, extracted from many objects ; and, indeed, the sundry contemplations of my travels, in which my rumination often wraps me, in a most humorous sadness.”

Whilst reflecting on the fate of the pleasure-hunter, in the houses of his pride, I have learned that the louder the mirth, the more quickly it subsides into melancholy. But we need not be defiled in our current through these muddy passages, unless their film hangs about the furrows of a deeply-worn heart, or excited conscience.

The melancholy of little minds is envy ; a passion not excitable by either of the above scenes. Adversity and melancholy have alike their sweet uses ; although, both of

them people the barren brain with horror. Happiness consists not in *having or holding*, else the rich would insure it with their lives, and secure immortality by purchase : though “ to have seen much and to have nothing, is to have rich eyes and poor hands.” They who husband the wealth of melancholy, and have minds to enjoy her treasures, need not fear the approach of poverty—a state only known to such as have been taught to mistake the fading pleasures of sense for happiness, and their intermission for the last ebb of human suffering.

Love of the Country,

A RHAPSODY.

God made the country, and man the town.—COWPER.

If one must have a villa in summer to dwell,
O give me the sweet shady side of Pall Mall.—*Song.*

THESE epigraphs exhibit great contrariety of taste ; and, probably, both are equally sincere. The sentiment of Cowper is terse and epigrammatic, and will find an echo in every lover of rural life. The ballad whence the last quoted lines are taken, is the offspring of the convivial muse, when the soul was in its full flow, and reason, though a light rider, still retained her seat. They, however, induce a comparison between the influence of Nature and Art, in

the pursuits of mankind ; and hence they become a valuable morality.

The influence of Art is strongly evident in self-love. It fosters pride in every shape. Amidst its glories men forget their origin, and cease to remember the puny brain of which they are the produce. Their perceptions thus become blunted : invention is racked to find new appetite ; and, by overstrained refinement, they may be said to slide into retrogression. To cheer and embellish life, and not to interdict its dearest enjoyments, should be the aim of art. Her “ gross handyworks ” may delight the eye, charm the ear, and fascinate the understanding, but they do not often reach the heart ; or, when they do, their influence is transient and useless. But it is for such delusions that men herd in cities, there to squander fortunes in the mimicry of Art, and waste whole lives in the study of its treasures. For these they neglect the real philosophy of Nature, and the “ good in every thing ” which is scattered throughout

her kingdoms. Thus, they exchange the towering sublimity of mountains for the frail splendour of palaces; the variegated hues of groves for the sickly glare of painted walls; the peaceful seclusion of valleys for the noisy brawlings of courts; the cheerfulness of contentment for the pining of fruitless ambition:—in short, the simplicity of Nature for the depravity of Art! How deplorable is this fatuity, by which men are led to compromise their own happiness. Whilst thus busied in the labours of idleness, man repines at the fleetingness of life. But mark—these pursuits, which are impiously designated as the glories and triumphs of man, serve to minister to his vanity and self-love, till, his efforts being flattered into perfection, he usurps a sort of mortal omnipotence. Such are the busy dreams of Art, from which the study of Nature can alone divert or reclaim mankind.

Perhaps I dwell too vehemently on these inconsistencies; but such were my sentiments on a recent visit to the palace of

Versailles. Tired with the gewgaws of Paris, I one day strayed to Versailles, to view that paragon of modern art—its palace. With the minute topography of the gardens of the Tuilleries and the Luxembourg still in my mind's-eye, I was delighted with those of Versailles, notwithstanding their incongruous admixture of nature and art—such as marble temples dedicated to courtezans, with stately groves and picturesque rides and walks, lawns, glades, &c. magnificent pieces of water, besides pools, basins, &c. with superb fountains, and the unnumbered and finely-executed statues that adorn them. To say the truth, I was, however, disappointed ; but not to have admired them would have been “ bad taste,” besides damping the communicative zeal of my guide ; so that with the frequent aid of “ *magnifique ! superb !* ” I contrived to suppress my real sentiments. The splendid terrace, as an artificial contrivance, is, perhaps, unrivalled.

This vast palace contains 6400 rooms,

reckoning large and small ; which, destitute as they are of furniture, still impress the spectator with wonder and admiration. The Grand Gallery surpasses all the rest in magnificence : it is thirty-seven fathoms in length, lighted by seventeen large windows, opposite which are arcades, occupied by mirrors, which reflect the gardens and fountains. As I paced this splendid vista, with one of the royal footmen, who was very loud and incessant with “ *Louis Quatorze !*” the broad beams of the sun fell on the rich gilding of the walls and ceilings, and just served to light up their trophied scenes from the life of the renowned and extravagant monarch. Not a vestige of furniture remains ; but as if to keep up the folly of the splendid ruin, I found a gilder employed in renovating one of the rooms, viz.—the chamber of Marie Antoinette, in which the revolutionary ruffians stabbed through the covering of the bed, the queen having previously escaped from this room to the king’s chamber. The chapel, with its

costly Italian marble columns and pavement, remains a perfect gem ; but the theatre is hastening to decay. Here the light is almost excluded, the gilt-work fronts of the boxes are deeply tarnished, mouldings are flying off, and, altogether, there is a dusty and death-like stillness about the place ; which, contrasted with the usual associations of a theatre, produced on me an impression of painful melancholy.

The usual sentiment of visitors to the palace, is that of mixed gratification ; but I would sooner have written lord Bacon's Essays, than have the glory of being its founder. The site is indescribably beautiful, though not from its commanding in its prospect five other palaces. I was, however, most gratified with a walk through the orangery of trees two and three hundred years old, which will, probably, be flourishing when the decorative glare of the palace shall be obscured, and even its walls be fast crumbling to dust. It is, altogether, a perfect specimen of princely pro-

fusion ; and whether as a work of art, or in connexion with the events of history, you are glad to quit the spot. The town of Versailles, too, is deserted and gloomy. Its magnificence was like a work of enchantment : its streets are formed like so many grand avenues, leading to, and terminating in, the royal palace, which is, indeed, a symbol of its lamentable fate.

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The country is my soul's rest. Its tranquillity, broken only by the sweet and simple music of birds, is almost unearthly. Some painters have represented paradise as a pile of mansions ; but were it not for the literal transcript of a certain passage in the New Testament, I would associate elysium with rural life, and rid the allegory of all aid or association of art.

I have a perfect remembrance of my earliest predilection for rural life. It began with *gardening* ; and when a child, I recollect to have enjoyed my garden, now almost in the heart of southern London, and to

have studied Abercrombie's Pocket Gardener with as much avidity as I read Robinson Crusoe. At Brambletye, too, I had my slip of ground. Planting and transplanting were my delight ; and here I drew my first lesson of the principle of existence from the germinating of an upturned bean ; and how pure has been my delight to identify this lesson among the philosophical truths of maturer studies. The seed which my tiny hands let fall into the bosom of the earth, I saw peeping through little clods, after the kind and quickening showers of spring. The plant which my impatience led me to steal from its native rooting place, drooped in its new soil, but revived after the genial damps of night. How analogous is this frailty of vegetable life with the fates and fortunes of nature's noblest sons, whose course is but a link in the grand chain of being—thus making man resemble a plant on the earth, over which he rules, and reducing the gradations of animal and vegetable existence to an imperceptible transition. Flowers, those

transient emblems of our versatile lives, were also admitted, from the modest violet to the curious passiflora, and the gaudy array of the tulip. All were numbered in my little family, and with more than paternal care, I watched their growth, while my garden was to me an Eden of bliss.

Such were the rural amusements of my boyhood ; and in all the little sojourns of those days, among uncles, aunts, and cousins, my first object was to secure “ a garden.” At some schools, too, the privilege of gardens is allowed, but ours was too numerous for that indulgence ; and I did not regret this, for in so large an assembly, the petty burnings and jealousies of humanity might have burst forth, and thus have spoiled that simplicity of manners which gardening is calculated to encourage. As if to compensate for these privations at school, I was indulgently noticed by the relatives of the master, (who were farmers) and with his children I usually paid them a few periodical visits, among which was

one afternoon set aside for gathering daffodils, in a meadow four miles distant, where they grew in early profusion. This was called *Daffying*, and was the first rustic treat of the year. We gathered the flowers into clusters on sticks, and thus carried them home in triumph, often singing on the road,

Daffydown dilly is coming to town,
With her yellow petticoat and her green gown;

from the old Norfolk song. This was in a picturesque district of Hertfordshire. In Sussex the plant is called Lent Lily, from the period of its coming into flower. Her-
rick's well-known ode, beginning

Fair daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon, &c.

is addressed to this flower : its elegant pale yellow cups are the pride of April, and, like its sunshine, their tender nature droops amidst the early storms of spring.

Is there on earth a purer delight than that of Gardening, or a more refreshing scene than a *garden* ? It is, indeed, holy ground, whence the sacred historian has

dated our first nature, and whose simplicity the poet has embellished with the sublimest flights of song. But when evil was first sown in the heart of man, how appropriate was his expulsion from such a scene of harmony and love, when he was declared unfit for its heavenly region, and quickly driven from the state he was intended to adorn. Hence began his debasement: the nobility of nature fell, and nought was left but the clay and gross material of form, to become regenerate in blissful immortality. Some of the principal incidents of this blessed mission were in gardens—witness the re-appearance of Christ after his resurrection. Thus, a garden has been the scene of man's birth—his fall—and proffered redemption. Is not such a spot, then, well fitted for the incense of adoration and divine love, the only accepted tribute of man to his Author: is it not calculated to purify his heart from unholy desires, to quell the storms of passion, and render him tranquil and happy. Its associations will lead him

to meditate and contemplate—not in the gloom of despair—but in the cheerfulness of hope, which will shine like a radius of glory around his heart. In the tenderness of spring, or the infancy of Nature; the buoyant hope of summer, her pride; the mellowed richness of autumn, her perfection and decay; or the scowl of winter, and the last exit of icy age—he may reflect till

One unbounded spring encircle all.

Phenomena of heat and cold closely resemble the cares and crosses of his unbratle and transitory life; and the grain, the blade, and the ear, are as so many stages of his being. With Nature's broad volume before him, how can he wander from such divine truths—how can he stray from her refreshing scenes to the despicable haunts of folly and guilt, in which he is prone to forget that bounteous hand which constantly nourishes and sustains him.

Opposed to the blessed study of looking “through Nature up to Nature's God,” are

the seductions of art in crowded cities. Infants are universally pleased with the simplicity of the country, and the unnumbered variety of its leaves, fruit, and flowers. Here they can, in fields and lawns, and from the warblings of birds, learn to lisp the praises of the first Being ; and amidst this picture of peace and love, rebuking conscience will sow the first seed of moral truth. But, how often does it happen, that children, thus brought into life, are hurried from these simple scenes to the rigid discipline of art ; hence to the gay theatre of the world, ere reason has taken root in their minds, and cunning rendered them safe from the lures of pleasure. At first, they are terrified with the glitter of art ; till change of atmosphere vitiates the appetite, and what was at first sight repulsive, by frequency becomes inviting. The toys and baubles of the nursery are the first objects to excite the sparks of self-love ; and the same effect is visible through life, from the rattle of infancy to the sceptre of riper years. The

froward child, the obstinate youth, and the unsparing oppressor, act but one part in the philosophy of life, though its business be extended to many scenes and stages.

The Town is the work of man, and Art is the scope of his invention ; but Nature is plundered for all his triumphs. He hews down forests, and quickly covers seas with ships, capable of transporting him to the varieties of soil and climate, and of supplying all the cravings of his luxury. By the same means he ransacks the earth for material to build palaces and cities, whose finery leads him to forget that he is of matter still more destructible. Here begins his idolatry of Art ; but to escape the chastisement of the consciousness of evil, he tortures his brain with the subtleties of erring reason, miscalled philosophy. At length, like the besotted historian, he designates all men who are unlike him, barbarians, and teaches others to look upon his ancestors as belonging to savage tribes. Disdaining physical force, in proportion as the virility and

real dignity of Nature have been impaired by vice, he has thrown aside the sinew and skin, and has adopted a set of subtler weapons—such as will enable the weak and wicked to fight in ambush against the virtuous. Hence, his dominion is extended by the magic of Art, and his fancy fondled in her dreams, till life becomes a mere scene of gay illusion. But how dark and dreary are its endings: the vessel perishes with its luxuries in a troubled sea; the palace moulders into ruins, or falls a prey to more summary calamity, its nice decorations fade and rot in a few generations, and its history is lost in legendary lore. In the mean time, the constant reproductiveness of Nature supplies all the ravages of Art,—and decay is followed up by new successions of beauty. But it may be asked, a few centuries hence where will be the proud piles of the Alhamra, the Escorial, or Versailles?*

* Until very lately it was a common opinion that Louis XIV. burnt all the bills relative to the building of the palace of Versailles—like a citizen after an expensive excursion.

Apart from other enjoyments, the pleasures of “ the country life ” induce health, vigour, and strength. They exclude feverish luxury, and allow us to return to their indulgence with additional zest ; hence the comparative misery of what the world calls *a man of pleasure*. Many minds are ill framed for retirement, and still fewer for solitude ; but all are naturally fitted for the enjoyment of the country. Rapine and fraud first drove mankind to associate in communities for mutual protection, not for mutual corruption and ruin. Here, the bland sympathies of kindred souls were first attuned, to cheer us through life, and not to estrange us from the unsophisticated enjoyments of Nature. Still, how few are devoutly attached to rural pleasures, and how many are contented with the most super-

It has, however, been recently ascertained that the money expended on Versailles, from 1664 to 1690, was 81,151,414 francs, or about 6,300,000*l.* at the present day. Amongst items, we find that the machine of Marly cost, without the pipes or aqueducts, nearly 280,000*l.* For plate, pictures, medals, &c. not comprised in the above, upwards of 500,000*l.*

ficial knowledge of the inherent beauty of her kingdoms ;* how many who decide on the merits of a mimic artist are ignorant of the glorious master pieces of the Original. The pleasure and advantages of a reflective mind, in appreciating the harmonies of this lower world, are, however, two-fold, since they lead to the contemplation and enjoy-

• Gilbert White's *Natural History of Selborne* is one of the most delightful *household* books in our language. Parochial and Natural Histories also belong to the most interesting literature of all times. They have not the common fault of history, to make you think that the only great men in the world are princes, heroes, and statesmen; but they concern men's *homes* and firesides, and represent every village as a microcosm. This is the only method of attaining a true knowledge of nature; for nations, cities, and villages, are but so many concentric circles of the whole system. There is a district, the *Natural History* of which I hope one day to complete, so as to perfect a little labour which I have already, in part, sent to the world. If God should spare me from the storms of life, and I should ever reach the haven of undisturbed old age, this should be the first labour of my retirement. As it is, I am but a humble insect in the sun-beam of fate and fortune; but as the great man of antiquity desired that he might die with the setting sun before him, so I desire that *my* little sun may set in the peaceful vales of the land of my youth—to propitiate, in my last moments, an unmerited, though not un hoped for, succession of never-ending peace.

ment of another, still more sublime and beautiful.

In the preceding pages I have dwelt on *Gardening*, from a persuasion of its being the purest and most refreshing exercise and study for youth and age, and as most conducive to a taste for the delightful recreations of natural philosophy. Wisdom is alone beneficial to man, inasmuch as it leads to his content ; every other study is vexatious and wearisome, and only calculated to excite envy and disquietude. We have on record innumerable instances of the attachment of great and wise men, to the pursuits of rural life, all of whom have indulged their taste for Gardening. Of the originators of palaces and their gardens, I do not generally speak, because there is too much form in their disposal, and they are, for the most part, too near the monuments of art. The humility of nature will not allow their immediate association ; they must be at a distance, or the deception is destroyed.

It would be difficult to find a subject

which has been more fervently treated by poets and philosophers, than the love of gardens. In old Rome, poets sung of their gardens. Ovid is so fond of flowers, that in the account of the Rape of Proserpine, in his *Faſti* he devotes several lines to the enumeration of flowers gathered by her attendants. But the passion for gardening, which evidently came from the east, never prevailed much in Europe, till the times of the religious orders, who greatly improved it.

In the whole compass of English literature, perhaps no pursuit is more beautifully illustrated than Love of the Country. Its peaceful amusements were even blended with chivalric life. "Hunting and falconry," says Mr. Mills, "the amusements of the cavalier were images of war, and he threw over them a grace beyond the power of mere baronial rank." Herrick has commemorated all its festivities with his usual quaintness. Milton wrote many hours in his garden at Chalfont; and Cowley poured forth the

greatness of his soul among the boscs of his rural retreat at Chertsey. Lord Bacon is proverbial for his love of gardens ; sir William Temple discourses eloquently on the same ;* the illustrious Shaftesbury wrote his *Characteristics* in a delightful spot in Surrey ; Evelyn first cultivated the garden taste in England ; and sir Philip Sidney's beautiful *Arcadia* must not be overlooked. Pope's love of gardens is, perhaps, less to be admired ; his grotto had too great semblance of art : but within the same neighbourhood, Thomson

Sung the Seasons and their change

in a rustic summer house. Innumerable also are the devotional passages on this subject, in the self-written biographies of Christian and rural philosophers, besides

* Indeed, a passage in his writings runs thus :—" As *gardening* has been the inclination of kings and the choice of philosophers, so it has been the common favourite of public and private men ; a pleasure of the greatest, and the care of the meanest ; and, indeed, an employment and a possession, for which no man is too high nor too low."

those already mentioned. In our drama, too, are many happy allusions ; as the Duke, in *As You Like It*, and some scenes in *Cymbeline*, which are full of the touching simplicity of country life. Neither should it be forgotten that the earliest British dramas were *pastorals*, or tales of shepherds' loves. In our time, these scenes are generally less successful in representation than in reading, partly from want of true conception of character, and partly from the minds of the audience requiring stronger stimulants than they contain.

The ideas of rural enjoyment have, however, assumed another cast : they have become less philosophic, and are, for the most part, regulated by the caprices of wealth and high fashion ; and the majority of the people being drawn together in large knots, by the arts of life, or worse motives, are accustomed to short periodical visits to the country. Hence, their pleasures become so costly, as to assimilate to extravagant luxury ; and such precious intervals of toil are

eagerly seized by the ostentatious and purse-proud, as scope for their little aristocracies. Among these follies, the preference given to watering-places is not to be overlooked ; and it is some proof of the degenerate taste of our neighbours, the French, to find that this absurd custom is every year becoming more and more fashionable among them. To say that such excursions present any of the recreations of rural life, would denote gross ignorance and perverted taste ; since, according to the chronicles and calendars of fashion, their groupes indulge nearly every bad passion which a crammed metropolis is capable of spawning forth over the country ; and the ruling passion of the English for playing the *magnifico*, abroad and at home, does not modify the evil.

A handful of expensive young men and their flirting companions, a score of ladies of a certain age, and the same number of stupid bachelors and lean and slippered invalids, with a few rosy-gilled fathers and their “ better halves,” are the usual society

of watering-places ; whilst their amusements consist of taking coffee and rolls at mid-day in the *public* sunshine, idling, coquetting, and gaming at libraries and assemblies ; simpering over newspapers and scandal-novels, and learning to kill character and run down reputation, from morning till midnight.

But there is another and a better class of mankind, whose neglect of the country is still more culpable, not to say criminal, than the above ; inasmuch as they have the advantages of education, taste, and fortune, on their side. Such are all those who herd together in the court of fashion, from April to August in each year ; thus terminating the spring-tide of fashion with the summer of Nature. Their love of the country is confined to the forced luxuries of kitchen gardens, conveyed to them in wicker baskets ; and a few hundred exotics hired from a florist to furnish a mimic conservatory, for an evening rout. Here they remain, content to breathe through the lungs of the

parks, till their trees and the town grow “thin;” Ude, Jarrin, and Gunter, at last fail to produce a gusto, and their votaries are fairly worn out and blind with the gas, heat, and dust of the opera, and even the feet and foot-lights lose their charms. Now, when early leaves begin to fall, and remind old and young of their wrinkles, the parliament man sets off to recruit his eloquence in the chase; the coquette to repair those few wrecks of beauty which the season has spared her; and the young man of fashion to recruit his recreant limbs and shattered frame in the country. Then follow loud complaints of dulness and ennui, and scores of visiting friends go the round, from September to January, when they return to their “base purposes” in town.

All this proceeds from an overstrained refinement of life, or the interdict of Art! Neither of these parties know how to appreciate the pleasures of the country. The latter carry with them too much of the style of their town establishments, in ser-

vants,* equipage, &c.; and they would fain infect their halls with the gas and glitter of London routs. Hence the rich vein of hospitality and humour which once flowed among them, is narrowed and almost dried up, and with it much of the simplicity of men's lives, motives, and actions.

Contrast but for a moment this blaze of artificial excitement, and its *saturnalia* of fashion, with the unstudied and poetic ease of a rural retreat. Here, rest succeeds enjoyment, free from the pain of luxury and the returning pang of excess. Nature is our physician and our guide; and health the handmaid to real happiness. But the wealthy linger in the halls of pleasure till the

* Sir Thomas More, in his *Utopia*, thus alludes to the vasalage of wealth: "There is a great number of noblemen among you that carry about with them a great number of idle fellows, who never learned any art by which they may gain their living; and these, as soon as either their lord dies, or they themselves fall sick, are turned out of doors; for your lords are readier to feed idle people, than to take care of the sick; and often the heir is not able to keep together so great a family as his predecessor did." The latter part of this paragraph will apply to another age besides that in which the writer lived.

lamp of life is nearly extinct, when they flee from her “*noctes cenæque*,” and with debauched appetites and minds, and bodies equally unfit for pure enjoyment, they betake themselves, as a last resource, to retirement in the country. Thus, men trifle with their existence, till Nature, tired and disgusted with their impiety, and refusing to be longer replenished by human skill, shuts to the scene, and “life’s poor play is o’er.”

In occasional retirement, how innumerable are the amusements, even for those who spurn the ascetic state of solitude, despite the poetic enthusiasm of the amiable sir Philip Sidney :

O sweet woods, the delight of solitariness !

O how much do I like your solitariness !

In a cottage may be assembled all the comforts, and even many of the luxuries, of life ; whilst the *solitaire* may be left to his fruits and crystal well. The morning walk will produce an orison of praise, as an appropriate commencement of the duties of the day ;

the society of a retired few, or of those never-failing friends, well-chosen books ; our flower-garden at morn and eve, our little studies and recreations in natural philosophy ; our daily visit to some sequestered spot, the summit of a hill, an oft-remembered tree, or a grotto or ruin in some dark grove or shrubbery, or

Pacing thro' the forest
Chewing the food of sweet and bitter fancy—

may be numbered in the amusements of retirement. Rustic sounds are music sweet to the soul : the echo of lanes and dells ; the roar of a distant mill, or the busy gush of its wandering stream ; and the thousands of feathered choristers that tenant every tree, and make every thicket resound with their little peals of praise ; the radiant smile of showers, the gathering scowl of storms, and the whistle of winds ; the “joyful king of day,” the moon, and the starry splendour, or the silent shades, of night—are alike themes for the rural philosopher.

In these pursuits, how fascinating is the converse of elegant woman! how perfect is the happy, happy, harmony of such society! In astronomy, botany, geology, and elegant literature, how are all her graces reflected! But how far removed is such amiability and benignity of mind from the repulsive *hauteur* of a female slave of fashion, with all that decorative trickery and tinsel of art which is the indolence and *ennui* of weak minds: in the transition she almost becomes unsexed.

All that can enliven mankind, or lead them to the spring of bliss, is to be found in the country: it is the *Castalium* of earth; and to a fervent lover of Nature, Art may in vain throw open her store-houses, for her master-pieces are nothing worth when contrasted with the sweets of rural enjoyment. Simplicity is man's happiest state, but every attempt to seduce him from her paths is to be reprehended. The false gilding of pleasure will but lead him to the bark of folly, which is rapidly sailing down the stream of

time ; but it should be recollected that her course is beset with sands and shoals, and that in case of wreck, it is one of the maxims of the world to leave the victims to perish on the strand.

In examining the virtuous and happy lives of men, we find that great portions of their time were passed in rural retirement. Kings, when past the meridian of life, become sensible of this fact, and leaving the painted pomp of cities, hold their courts amidst woods and groves—so pleasantly do the charms of the country alternate with the cumbrous cares of state. The soliloquy in Shakspeare's Henry iv.

Methinks it were a happy life, &c.

is, doubtless, line by line, a true portraiture of the discontent of many wearers of diadems. In truth, the brightest examples of such a preference may be selected from the greatest and wisest of men, of all times and countries. Amidst the imagery of these associations, princes may learn humility, and ambition, contentment :

For who would rob a hermit of his weeds,
His few books, or his beads, or simple diet,
Or do his gray hairs any violence?

In the patriarchal ages of the world, we are presented with many interesting episodes which are characteristic of the happiness of such a state, among dwellers in tents, “hewers of wood, and drawers of water,” with flocks and herds, and other primitive possessions.

Youth is the season for the full enjoyment of the country. The great master of Nature drew his pictures of pastoral happiness from the scenes of his boyhood—perhaps from the vales of Stratford, or the woods and glades of Charlecot. The romances of Spenser, and the brilliant flights of Parnell’s muse sparkle with youthful vigour and beauty. It is in this season, also, that the MAN OF SENSIBILITY, who can “hang a thought on every thorn,” finds the sweetest repose in the solitudes of Nature. In her gay scenes he may forget past suffering amidst sweets that never cloy; and, in

her hours of gloom, he may find consolation among storms, which, unlike those of the world, are succeeded by days—unclouded and serene. If, perchance, the trials of youth are unmingled with self-reproach, there will be reason to hope, that the clouds which lower about the morning of life will gradually disperse before the sunshine of its mid-day, and lead on to a cheerful evening of *rest unto the soul*.

THE END.

Errata.—Page 20, line 12, *dele* comma.

In note, page 182, for “bell-hangers,” read “*bell-ringers*.”

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